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VC heroism in the Falklands

PATTON

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WWI fighter that seized back the skies

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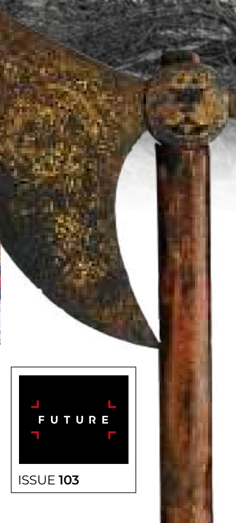
BATTLE FOR MOSCOW

topple the Soviet capital

ROME'S RECONQUEST

How the Byzantines almost restored the Empire



FUTURE
ISSUE 103

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KING & COUNTRY
UK AUTHORISED DEALER

South to The Falklands!

IN APRIL 1982, BRITAIN was astonished to find itself in an undeclared war with Argentina over a group of sparsely populated islands thousands of miles away in the South Atlantic.

Earlier that same month, a large Argentine military force landed on this small, windswept collection of islands and unilaterally declared Britain's rule to be over.

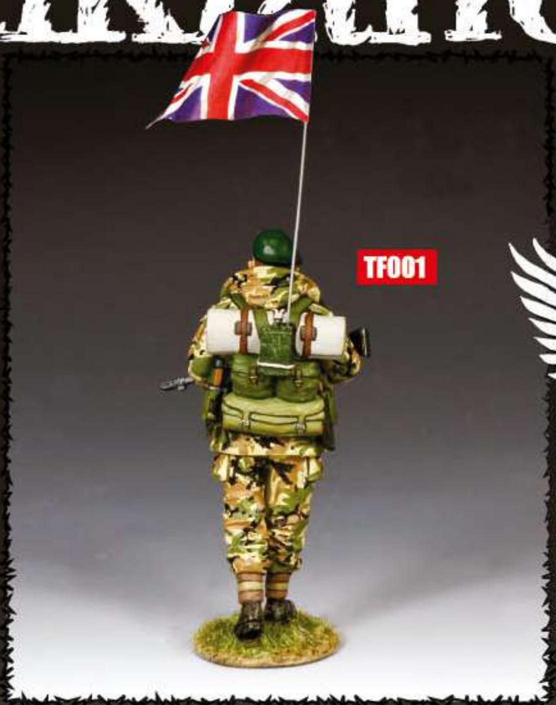
This was the first invasion of British territory since 1940 and the result would be a short but bloody conflict that decided the political fate of both countries... ***and their leaders.***

1982 • 40th ANNIVERSARY • 2022

As we begin 2022, **KING & COUNTRY** is proud to celebrate the ***40th Anniversary*** of a remarkable victory against great odds by the soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines of ***Her Majesty's Armed Forces*** in the most difficult of situations and environment.

Here we present our first four ***1:30 scale, all-metal, hand-painted military figurines*** representing ***Royal Marines*** of *3 Commando Brigade* ***'yomping'*** their way across East Falkland on their way to the island's capital, ***Stanley***.

TF001 ***'The Flagbearer'*** is based on the most iconic photo of the war taken by ***Petty Officer Peter Holdgate***, a Commando Forces Royal Navy photographer accompanying the Marines *'yomping'* towards Stanley.



TF001

TF002 ***'Destination: Stanley'*** shows a group of ***3x 'Bootnecks'*** also on foot marching and carrying huge, heavy backpacks alongwith their personal weapons and following ***TF001.***

ADVANCE PARTY

TF001 'The Flagbearer' is already available while ***TF002 'Destination: Stanley'*** will be released this February.

Among future releases will be several ***British Paratroopers*** alongwith some ***Argentinean Prisoners-of-War.***

Other figures representing additional British and Argentinean units involved in the conflict are also currently in development.

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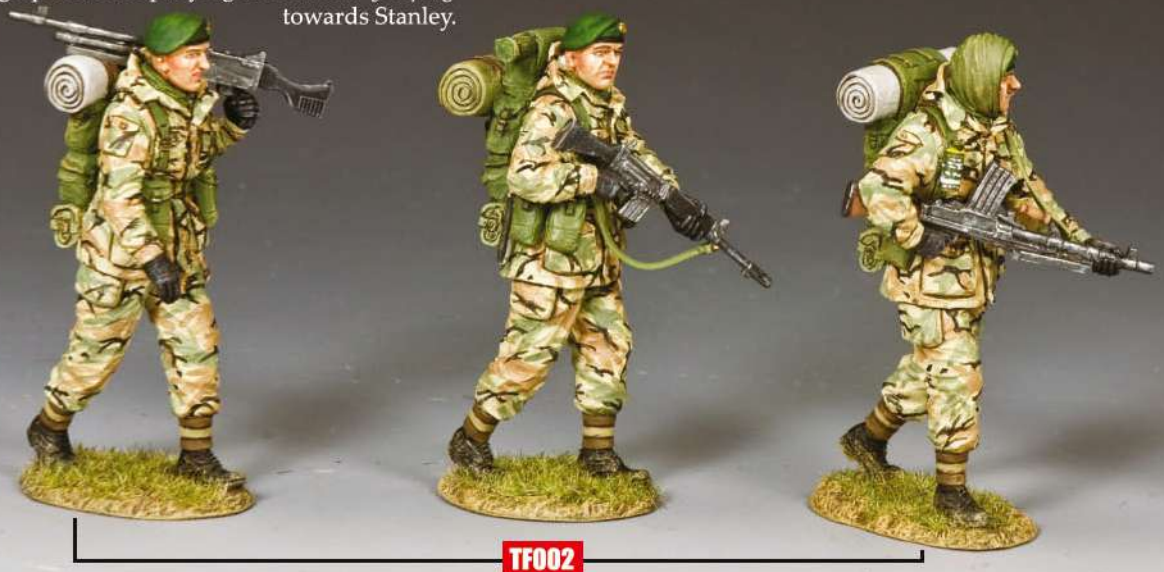

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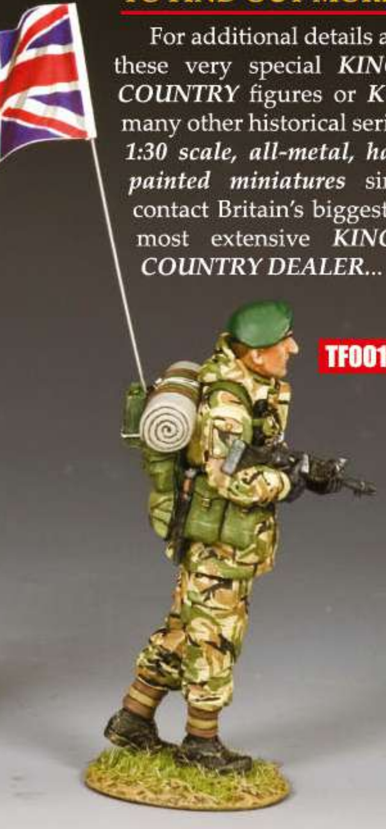

TF001

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KING & COUNTRY HEADQUARTERS
Suite 2301, 23rd Floor, No.3 Lockhart Road,
Wanchai,
Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2861 3450
E-mail: sales@kingandcountry.com

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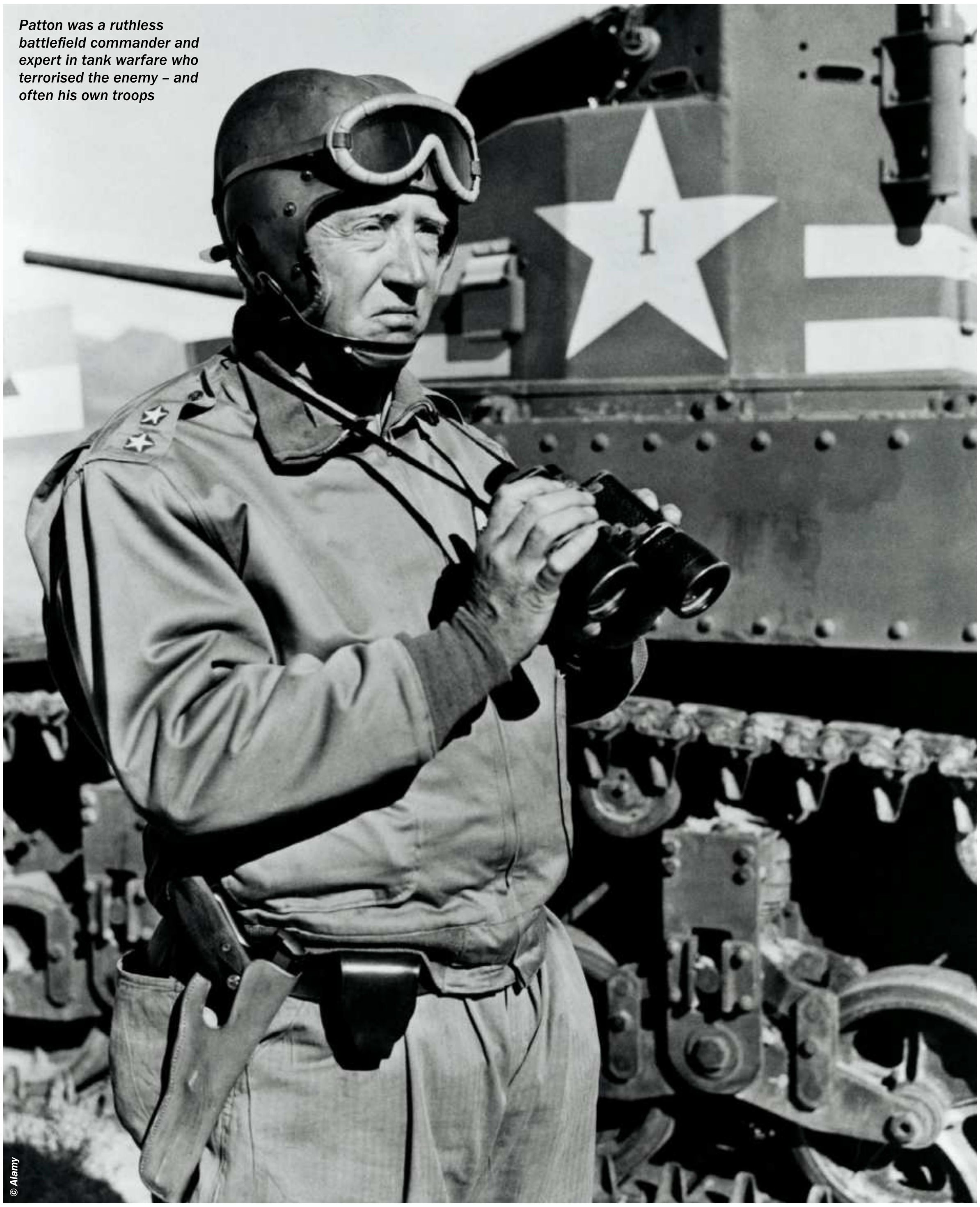

Patton was a ruthless battlefield commander and expert in tank warfare who terrorised the enemy – and often his own troops

© Alamy

CONTRIBUTORS

MICHAEL HASKEW

For this issue's cover feature, starting on page 24, Mike spoke with two historians about perhaps the most fascinating and formidable American general of WWII: George Patton. They discuss his leadership style, controversies and battlefield tactics.

MURRAY DAHM

In this issue's Frontline, Murray takes a look at the military decline of the Byzantine Empire – the last remnants of the Roman Empire. He explores the origins of the split between the Eastern and Western Empires, and the final collapse of Byzantium.

STUART HADAWAY

The Fokker Scourge of 1915-16 is a fascinating period in the early years of aviation warfare. For this issue's Operator's Handbook, on page 54, Stuart looks inside one of the fighters that brought an end to German dominance: the Nieuport 17.

George Smith Patton Jr is simultaneously among the most celebrated and controversial Allied generals who served during the Second World War. A dashing cavalryman, fencer and Olympic pentathlete, his early transition into armoured warfare during the First World War made him one of the US Army's foremost experts on the use of tanks on the battlefield. However, his tough leadership style did not come without drawbacks, and he grew a fearsome reputation among his men even if, as Eisenhower would later say, he "struck terror at the hearts of the enemy".

Tim

Tim Williamson
Editor-in-Chief

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TURN TO PAGE 48

PATTON

★★★★ "OLD BLOOD & GUTS"

24 The making of America's most celebrated and infamous WWII general

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FRONTLINE

BYZANTINE EMPIRE

12 TIMELINE
Rome's eastern empire endured for centuries after the fall of the west

16 BYZANTINE NAVY
The seas were kept under the empire's control thanks to its strong naval forces

18 NORMANS VS BYZANTINES
This 1081 battle saw a chance for Anglo-Saxon vengeance for their defeat in 1066

20 RECONQUERING THE EMPIRE
In the sixth century Justinian I almost reclaimed the Western Empire from the Goths

22 FALL OF THE EMPIRE
After years of decay, Constantinople was finally toppled after a brilliant Ottoman campaign

12

34

06 WAR IN FOCUS
Stunning imagery from throughout history

24 PATTON: "OLD BLOOD AND GUTS"
How the most controversial US general earned his celebrated and fearsome reputation

GREAT BATTLES

34 BATTLE OF ZAMA, 202 BCE
This clash between two powerful rivals would finally decide the Second Punic War

42 AT THE GATES OF MOSCOW
In the winter of 1941-2, the German push to the Soviet capital would reach its end

50 THE CONQUEST OF NORTHERN HONSHU
During the eighth century Japan's Yamato Empire sought to expand its borders north

OPERATOR'S HANDBOOK

54 NIEUPORT 17
This French fighter aircraft brought an end to the German Fokker Scourge of 1915-16

HEROES OF THE VICTORIA CROSS

60 IAN MCKAY
During the Battle of Mount Longdon, this sergeant risked his life to save his men

42

70

65 HOMEFRONT

66 MUNICH: THE EDGE OF WAR
The new Netflix film explores the role of Neville Chamberlain in the build up to WWII

68 MUSEUMS & EVENTS
A roundup of exhibitions and collections

70 WWII IN PHOTOS
Key WWII events this month, 80 years ago

72 REVIEWS
The latest military history film and books

77 FIVE BEST BOOKS ON...
A pick of the top books on George Patton Jr

78 AMERICA'S 'FEW'
How USMC pilots earned their stripes in Guadalcanal

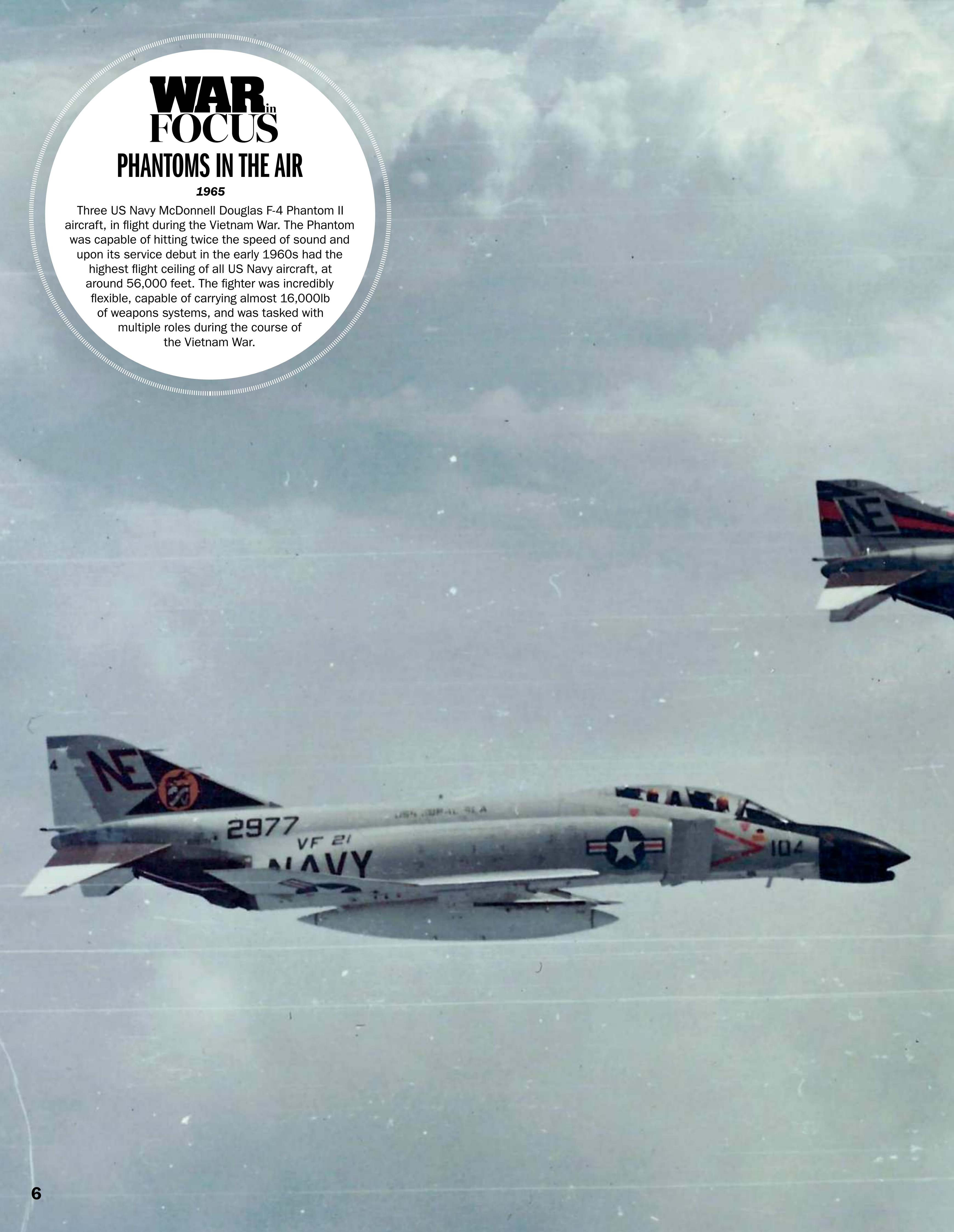
82 ARTEFACT OF WAR
Jousting amour owned by a Tudor knight

WAR in FOCUS

PHANTOMS IN THE AIR

1965

Three US Navy McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II aircraft, in flight during the Vietnam War. The Phantom was capable of hitting twice the speed of sound and upon its service debut in the early 1960s had the highest flight ceiling of all US Navy aircraft, at around 56,000 feet. The fighter was incredibly flexible, capable of carrying almost 16,000lb of weapons systems, and was tasked with multiple roles during the course of the Vietnam War.



NE
1488
USS CORAL SEA
106
2987
USS CORAL SEA
VF-154
453

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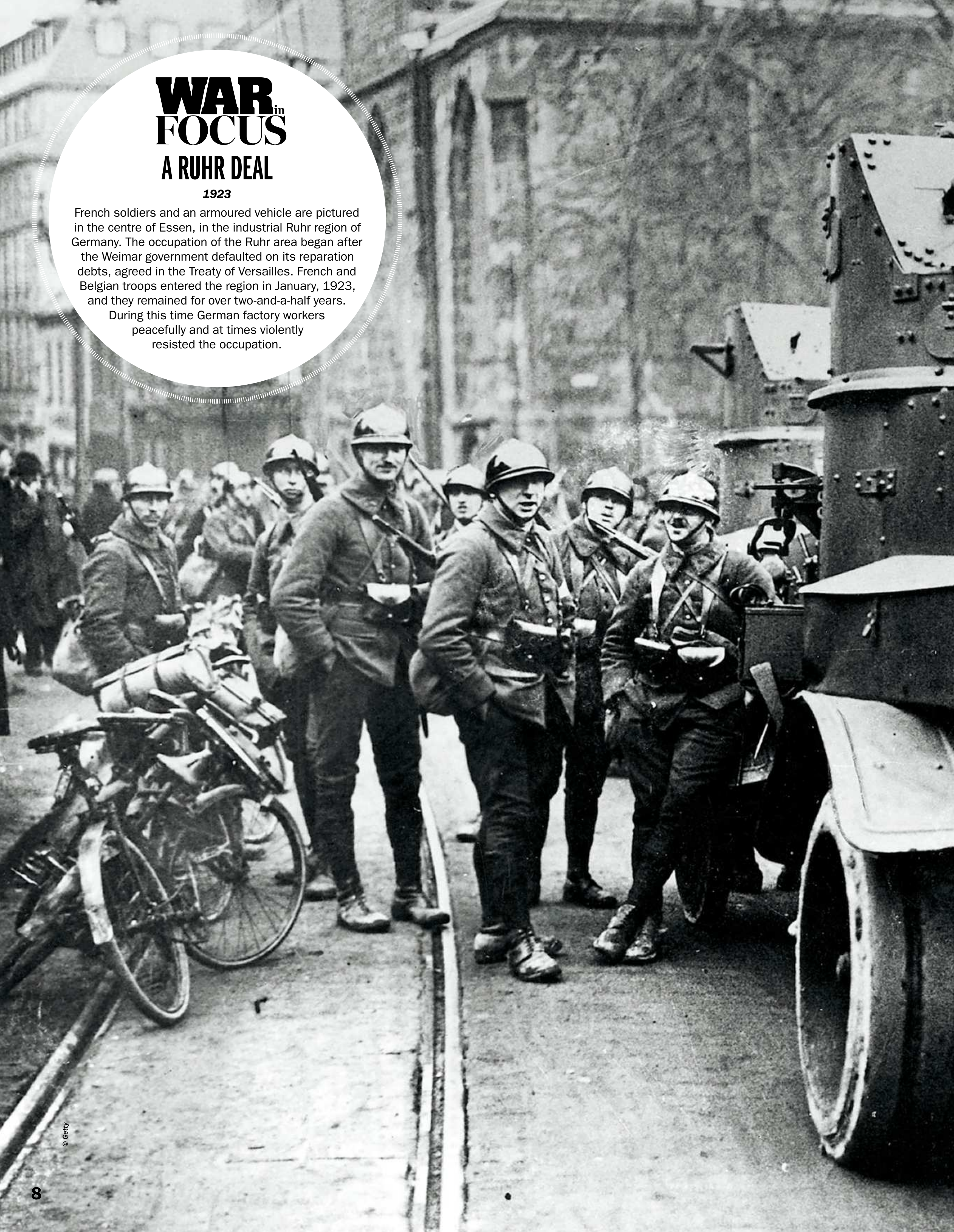


WAR in FOCUS

A RUHR DEAL

1923

French soldiers and an armoured vehicle are pictured in the centre of Essen, in the industrial Ruhr region of Germany. The occupation of the Ruhr area began after the Weimar government defaulted on its reparation debts, agreed in the Treaty of Versailles. French and Belgian troops entered the region in January, 1923, and they remained for over two-and-a-half years. During this time German factory workers peacefully and at times violently resisted the occupation.

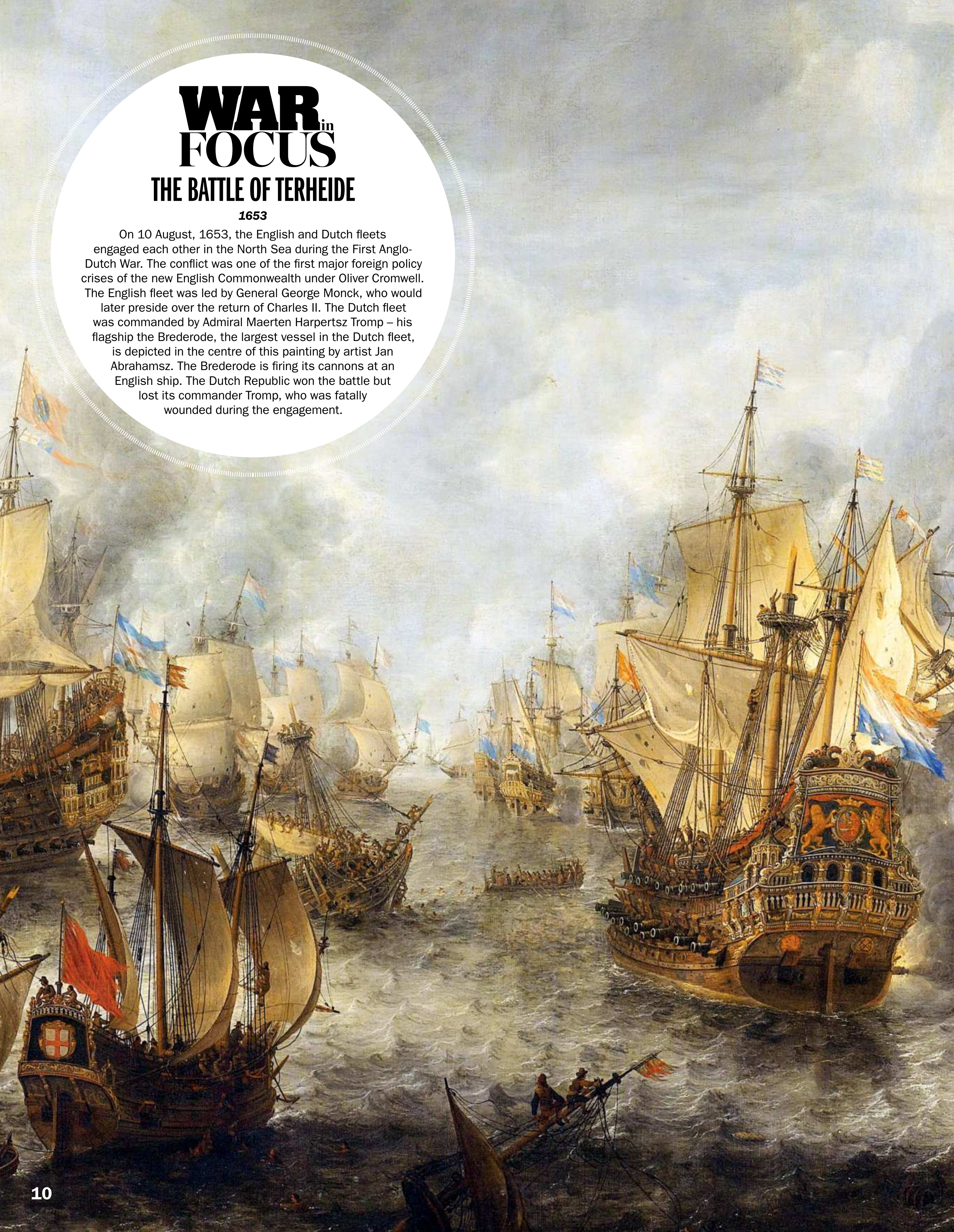
© Getty

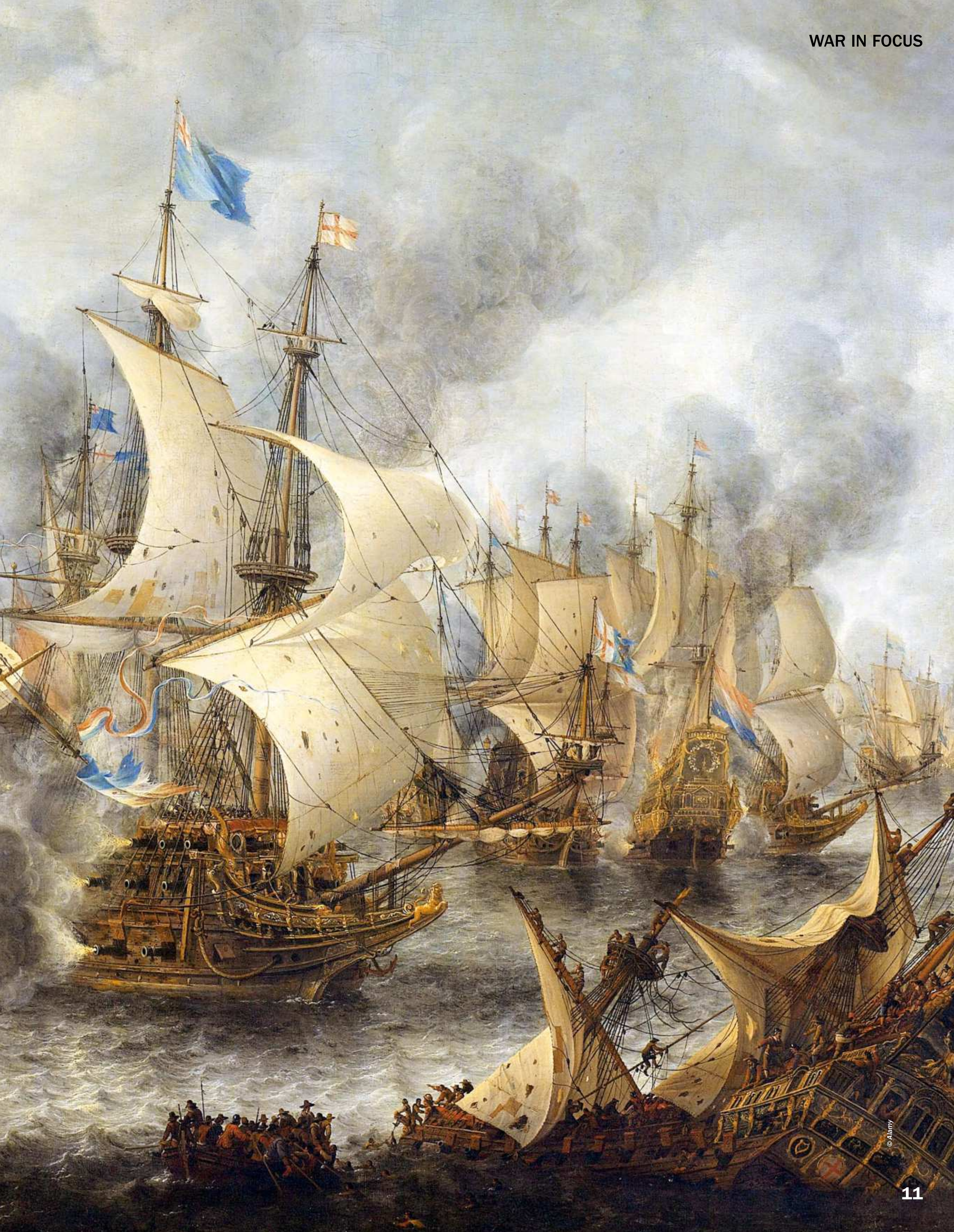
7

THE BATTLE OF TERHEIDE

1653

On 10 August, 1653, the English and Dutch fleets engaged each other in the North Sea during the First Anglo-Dutch War. The conflict was one of the first major foreign policy crises of the new English Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell. The English fleet was led by General George Monck, who would later preside over the return of Charles II. The Dutch fleet was commanded by Admiral Maerten Harpertsz Tromp – his flagship the Brederode, the largest vessel in the Dutch fleet, is depicted in the centre of this painting by artist Jan Abrahamsz. The Brederode is firing its cannons at an English ship. The Dutch Republic won the battle but lost its commander Tromp, who was fatally wounded during the engagement.





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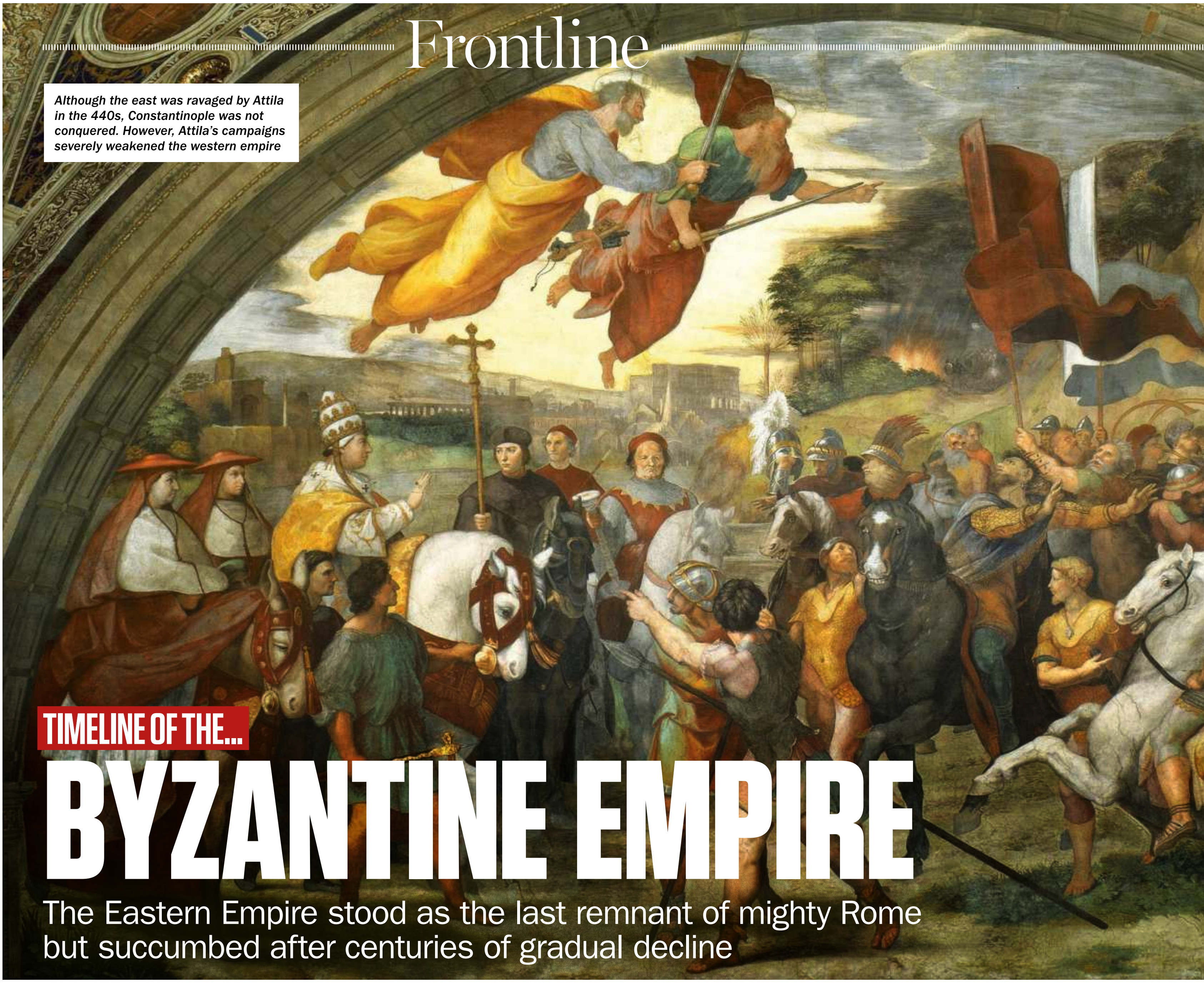


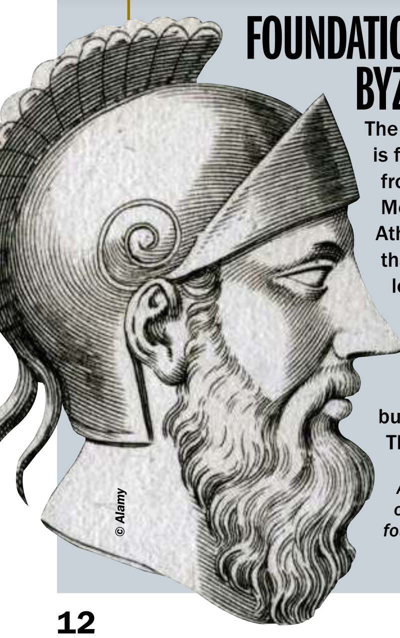
Although the east was ravaged by Attila in the 440s, Constantinople was not conquered. However, Attila's campaigns severely weakened the western empire

TIMELINE OF THE...

BYZANTINE EMPIRE

The Eastern Empire stood as the last remnant of mighty Rome but succumbed after centuries of gradual decline

657 BCE



FOUNDATION OF BYZANTION 01

The colony of Byzantion is founded by colonists from the Greek city of Megara (40km from Athens). Legend has it that the name of the leader of the colonists is Byzas, hence the name of the new city, although it may have been built on an existing Thracian settlement.

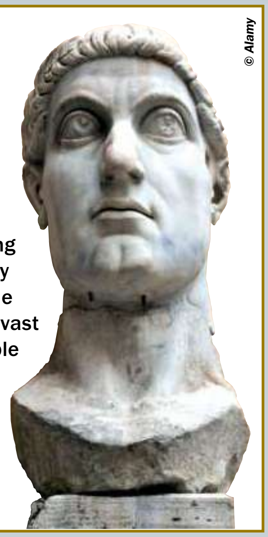
An idealised portrait of Byzas, legendary founder of Byzantion

© Alamy

May, 330 CE

FOUNDATION OF CONSTANTINOPLE

The Roman Emperor Constantine I (r.306-337 CE) moves the capital of the empire to a new city founded on the site of Byzantion, calling it Constantinople. The new city is ideally sited on several trade routes, is more central to the vast lands of the empire, and is able to be designed and built to suit the empire's needs.



Constantine founded the city which bore his name as a 'New Rome' and the civil and administrative centre of his empire

© Alamy

337 CE

THE COMING OF CHRISTIANITY

On his deathbed, Constantine is baptised. Christianity becomes the official religion of the empire (with the brief exception of the pagan emperor Julian, r.361-36CE). This new faith will shape the history of the world. Paganisim is outlawed in 391 CE.

The Hagia Sophia Mosque is built in 537 by the emperor Justinian I

Image: Wiki / PD / Arild Vågen

Image: Wiki / PD / Art

330 CE – 1453

IMPREGNABLE WALLS

Beginning with Constantine and added to at various stages in the history of the empire, the imposing walls of Constantinople, heart of the Byzantine Empire, are besieged many times but never taken by force until 1453.

© Alamy

January 395 CE

THE ROMAN EMPIRE IS SPLIT

At various points in the 4th century the Roman Empire has been split between east and west, ruled from Constantinople and Rome respectively. Theodosius (r.379-395 CE) reunites the empire under his sole rule. On his death, the empire is split between his sons, Arcadius in the East and Honorius in the West. The Roman Empire will never be whole again.

© Alamy

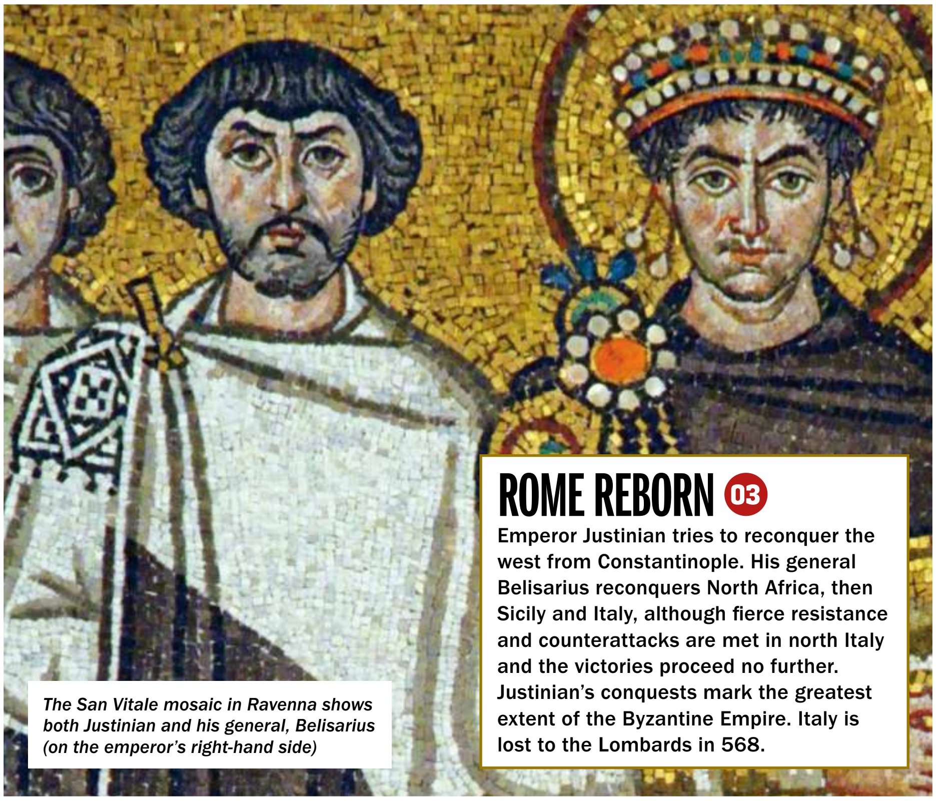
Arcadius (r.395-408 CE) rules the Eastern Roman Empire from Constantinople. His father had declared him co-ruler of the eastern half of the empire at the age of five in 383 CE

476 CE

FALL OF THE WEST: BYZANTIUM IS BORN 02

Although both east and west suffer depravations at the hands of the Huns, the east weathers this storm far better than the west. By 476 CE the last emperor of the west, Romulus Augustulus, is deposed by the barbarian Odoacer, probably of Gothic origin. This marks the beginning of the Byzantine Empire, although inhabitants continue to call themselves Romans.

527 – 565



The San Vitale mosaic in Ravenna shows both Justinian and his general, Belisarius (on the emperor's right-hand side)

Image: Wiki / PD / Art

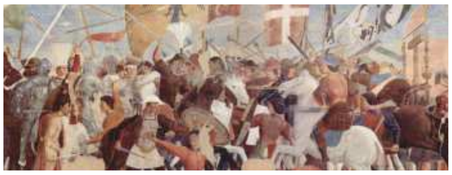
ROME REBORN 03

Emperor Justinian tries to reconquer the west from Constantinople. His general Belisarius reconquers North Africa, then Sicily and Italy, although fierce resistance and counterattacks are met in north Italy and the victories proceed no further. Justinian's conquests mark the greatest extent of the Byzantine Empire. Italy is lost to the Lombards in 568.

610 – 641

THE EMPIRE SHRINKS 04

The reign of Heraclius (r.610-641) sees the Byzantine Empire shrink. Although eventually successful against the Sassanians, a new threat in the south – the Rashidun Caliphate – captures Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia and Armenia. Attempts to shore up the empire in the west and forge alliances with western allies have varied results.



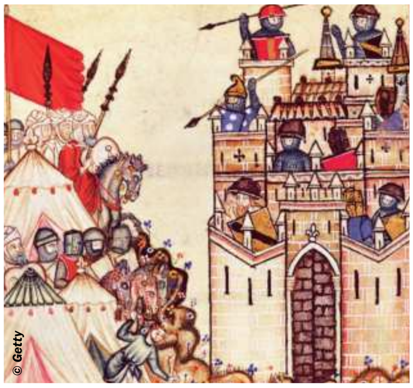
The Sassanians fought against Heraclius even reaching Constantinople, but the city's walls saved it

Image: Wiki / PD / Art

676 – 1453

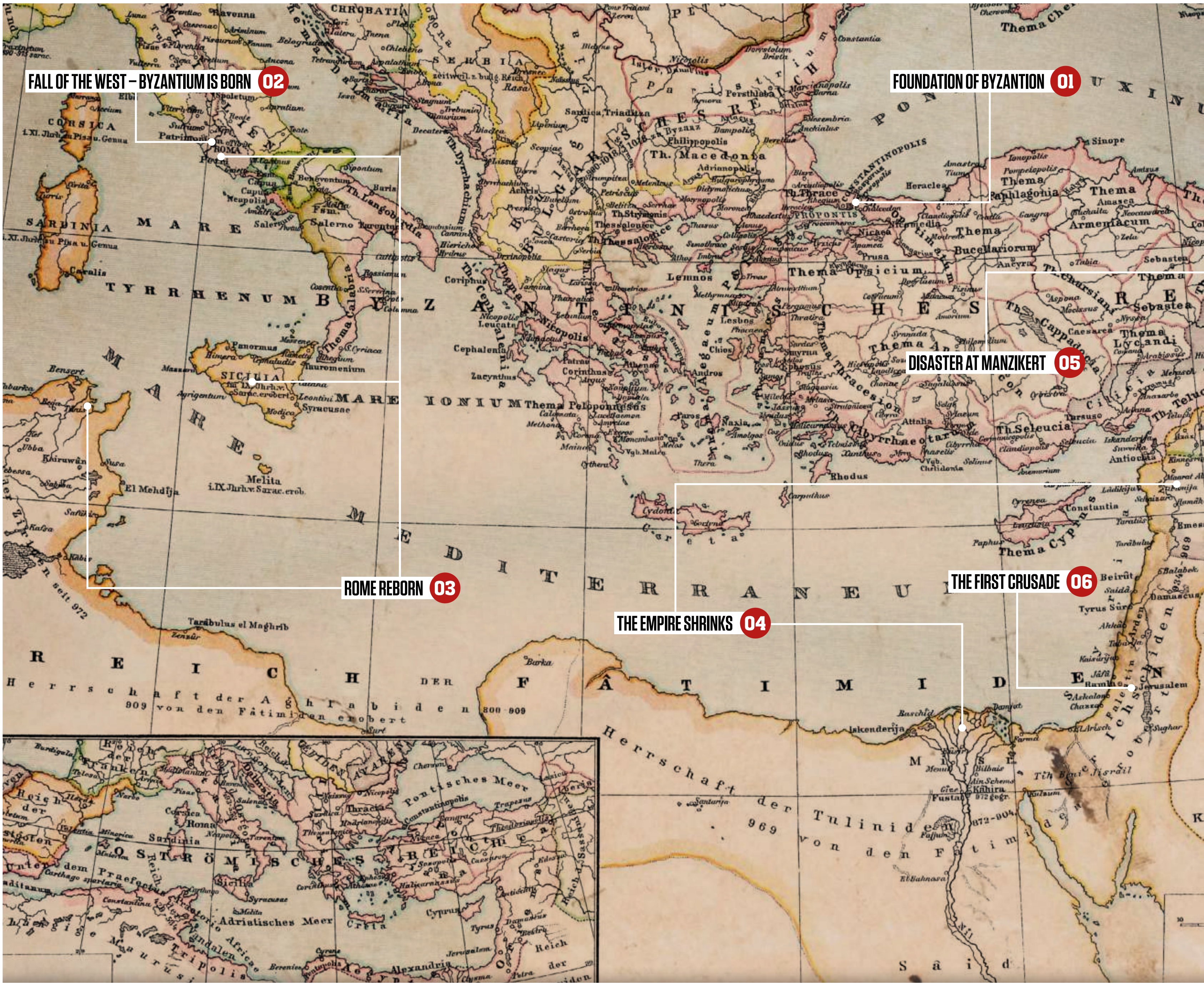
CITY UNDER SIEGE

Constantinople is put under siege by relentless Muslim and Balkan campaigns multiple times in its history, but the walls of the city always protect it and the sieges are ultimately unsuccessful. As Byzantine territory waxes and wanes, the ability of Constantinople to resist being taken by force seems the only constant.



© Getty

There were several layers to the defence of Constantinople, including her walls and navy. Greek fire was used against enemy ships from the 7th century onwards

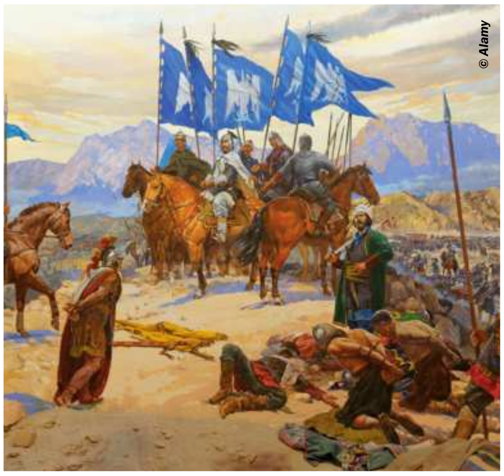


FOUNDATION OF BYZANTION 01
FALL OF THE WEST – BYZANTIUM IS BORN 02
ROME REBORN 03
THE EMPIRE SHRINKS 04
DISASTER AT MANZIKERT 05
THE FIRST CRUSADE 06

August 1071

DISASTER AT MANZIKERT 05

The Byzantine Emperor Romanus IV looks to throw back the advances of the Seljuk Empire into Byzantine territory. He is catastrophically defeated and captured at Manzikert, which throws the Byzantine Empire into a decade of civil war and chaos.



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The captured Byzantine Emperor Romanus IV is led before the Seljuk leaders, including the sultan Alp Arslan – the 'Great Lion.'

1096-99

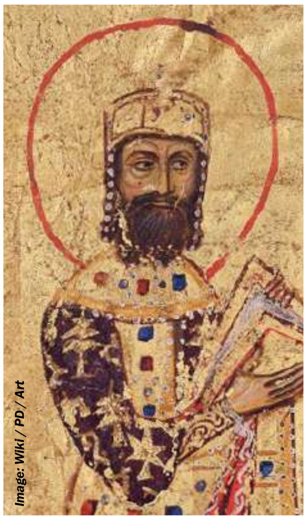


Image: Wiki / PD / Art

THE FIRST CRUSADE 06

Although the Eastern and Latin Churches excommunicated one another in 1054, the new Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Comnenus appeals to Pope Urban II to call a Crusade to recover the Holy Land. This is immensely successful and leads to the expansion of Byzantine territory once more, as well as the capture of Jerusalem by the crusaders.

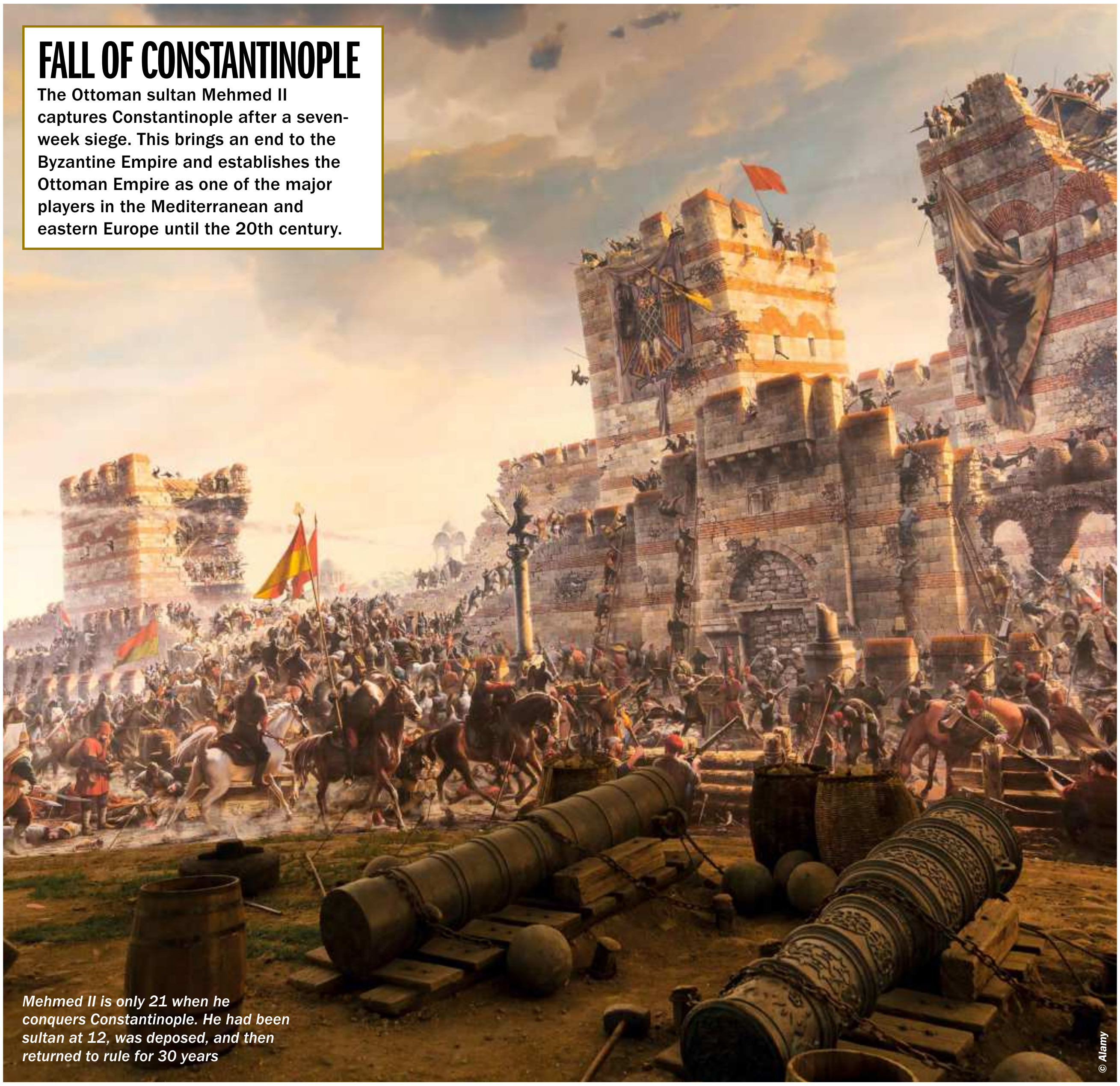
Alexius I establishes the Comnenian dynasty which lasts until 1185 and sees a restoration of Byzantine fortunes and a Byzantine Renaissance

Soteriopolis
Archabis
Trapezus
Chaldia
Armenia
Erzerum
Mesopotamia
Melitene
Edessa
Harrân
Rakka
REICH DER Hamdaniden
Herrsch. der BUIDEN
Euphrates
REICH DER SARMATEN seit ca. 900
Maßstab 1:11.300.000
Geographische Meilen

© Alamy

FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

The Ottoman sultan Mehmed II captures Constantinople after a seven-week siege. This brings an end to the Byzantine Empire and establishes the Ottoman Empire as one of the major players in the Mediterranean and eastern Europe until the 20th century.



Mehmed II is only 21 when he conquers Constantinople. He had been sultan at 12, was deposed, and then returned to rule for 30 years

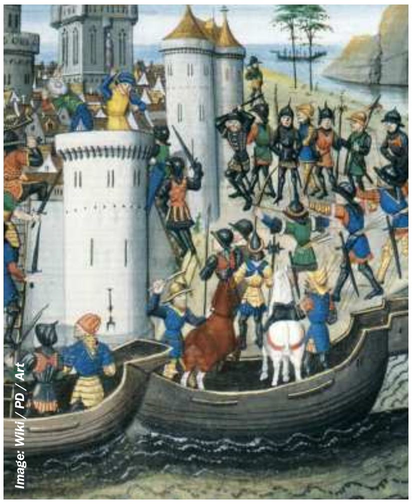
© Alamy

May 1453

April 1204

THE CATASTROPHIC FOURTH CRUSADE

The Fourth Crusade ends in disaster when the crusaders decide to sack Constantinople rather than continue on to the Holy Land. In the aftermath a Latin Empire is established in Constantinople and the former empire is split into several smaller parts. Constantinople is recaptured from the Latins in 1261.



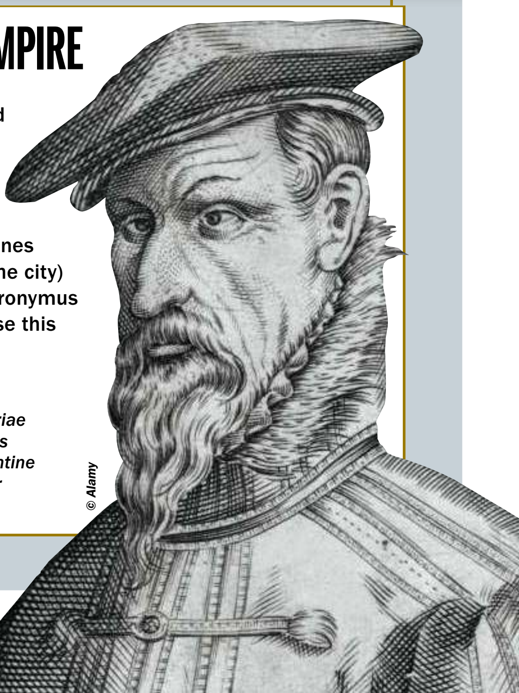
The crusaders who came as allies showed that they were enemies when they plundered and pillaged the greatest city in Christendom

Image: Wiki / PD / Art

1557

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

The Byzantines referred to themselves as Romans, and their empire as the Roman Empire, seeing it as a continuation of the glorious past. The first scholar to call them Byzantines (using the earlier name of the city) is the German historian Hieronymus Wolf (1516-80). Scholars use this nomenclature thereafter.



Wolf publishes the Corpus Historiae Byzantinae in 1557, which begins a tradition of exploring the Byzantine Empire separate from the earlier Roman Empire

© Alamy

THE BYZANTINE NAVY

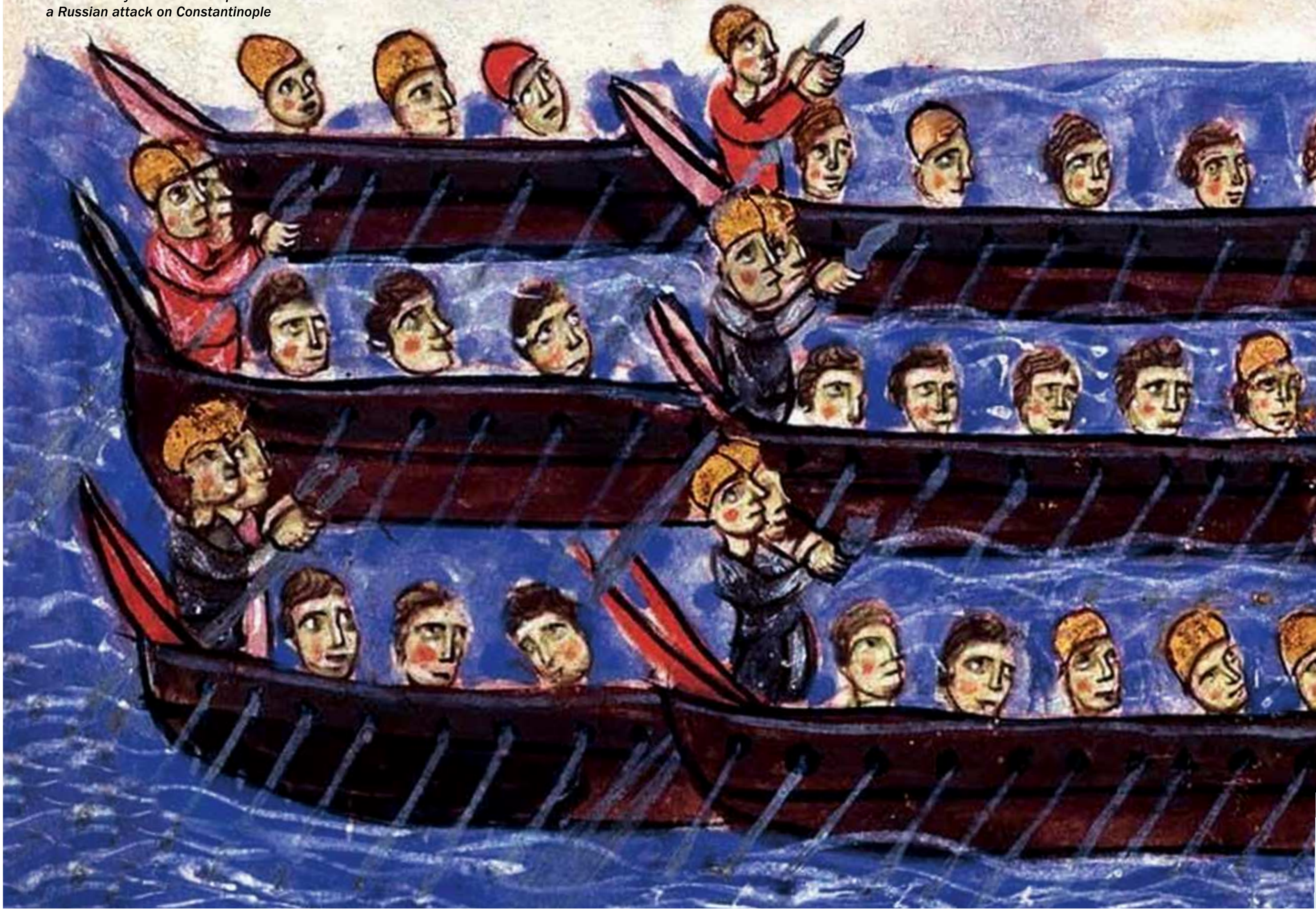
The Romans dominated the Mediterranean for so many centuries that they called it 'Our Sea', yet even with the help of 'Greek Fire' the later Byzantine navy lost that supremacy to its many foes

The conquests during the reign of Justinian reclaimed large swathes of territory lost after the fall of the western half of the empire, but control over these lands and the rest of the Byzantine Empire was no longer based on the domination of roads by land forces like the legionaries. After the sixth century in particular, the imperial capital of Constantinople had to project its power through supremacy at sea. Byzantine territory may not have extended far inland over much of the empire, but their ability to quickly bring military support and supplies to any of their coastal lands was a huge advantage.

One major reason why the Byzantine navy was generally better than that of its enemies was the introduction of new types of war galleys called dromons. At first, these vessels were similar to the previous liburnae, the best warships at the height of the Roman Empire. What set the dromons apart was that they incorporated one, or several, technological advances that made them faster in combat. Modifying the hull design, replacing square sails with lateen sails, adding a bank of oars under a full deck, and switching to the spur instead of the traditional ram were all improvements that increased the manoeuvrability and speed of the vessels, especially in calm water.

Yet even with the superior dromons the situation changed dramatically for the Byzantines in the seventh century. The rise of Islam created powerful new enemies who challenged the empire's control of the sea. Not only did the Arab conquests seize much of the former inland territory of the western Mediterranean, but the Muslim governors of Egypt and Syria also began to build their own fleets. To construct their war galleys, the Arabs adopted the technology and practices of the Byzantines as much as possible, though especially in the beginning the Arab ships were larger, heavier and therefore slower than the imperial dromons.

In 941 the Byzantine fleet repulsed a Russian attack on Constantinople



The Arabs were newcomers to naval warfare, yet they learned quickly and managed to crush the fleet of Emperor Constans II near the southern coast of Anatolia in 655. Luckily for the Byzantines, Caliph Uthman was killed the following year, which gave them time to rebuild their naval forces and reassess the situation. However, the respite was brief as the new Umayyad Caliph, Muawiyah, was ready to take the fight to the very gates of Constantinople.

By 673, the Arab fleets had reached the capital to begin the siege of the city that would last for the next few years. But in that time, the Byzantines created an incendiary weapon that would ultimately shift the tide in their favour. In 677, the imperial navy unleashed 'Greek Fire' from siphons mounted on their dromons, to devastating effect. The Arab forces had never encountered a weapon like it and watched in horror as their ships and sailors were consumed in flames.

Even though they had repelled the siege of their great city, the Byzantines were in no state to go on the offensive. Instead, the empire just fought to keep its land in other regions like North Africa and Southern Italy. Then in 717, another Umayyad Caliph, Sulayman ibn Abd al-Malik, felt ready to launch another attack on Constantinople. Once again, 'Greek Fire' proved to be too powerful a weapon to overcome at sea. With their army devastated by disease, starvation and harsh winter weather, the Arabs were forced to retreat with the few soldiers they had left.

After the Umayyad Caliphate collapsed and the Abbasids rose to take its place, the focus of the new caliphate was to the east, which allowed the Byzantines to reclaim their supremacy in the Mediterranean for brief periods in the 8th and 9th centuries. However, the Abbasids eventually shifted westwards too, along with new threats to the Byzantines from numerous Arab pirates and Al-Andalus in Spain.

After the Byzantines used 'Greek Fire' to destroy a massive Rus armada in 941, the empire finally dominated the eastern Mediterranean for the rest of the century. But that dominance bred a complacency that allowed the navy to fall into ruin. In 1081, Emperor Alexius Comnenus was forced to rely on the Venetian fleet for support when the Normans invaded. Over 100 years later the Venetians then turned on the empire and helped sack Constantinople in 1204, which cemented their position as one of the great naval powers with their new western-style galleys. Meanwhile, the Byzantine fleet slowly faded away until the empire was conquered by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

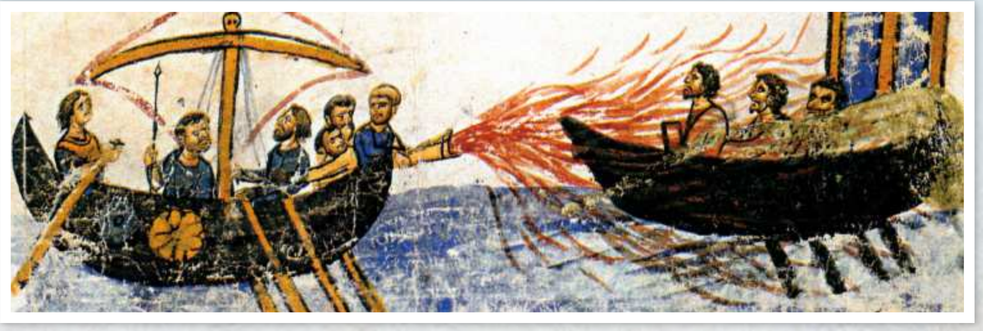
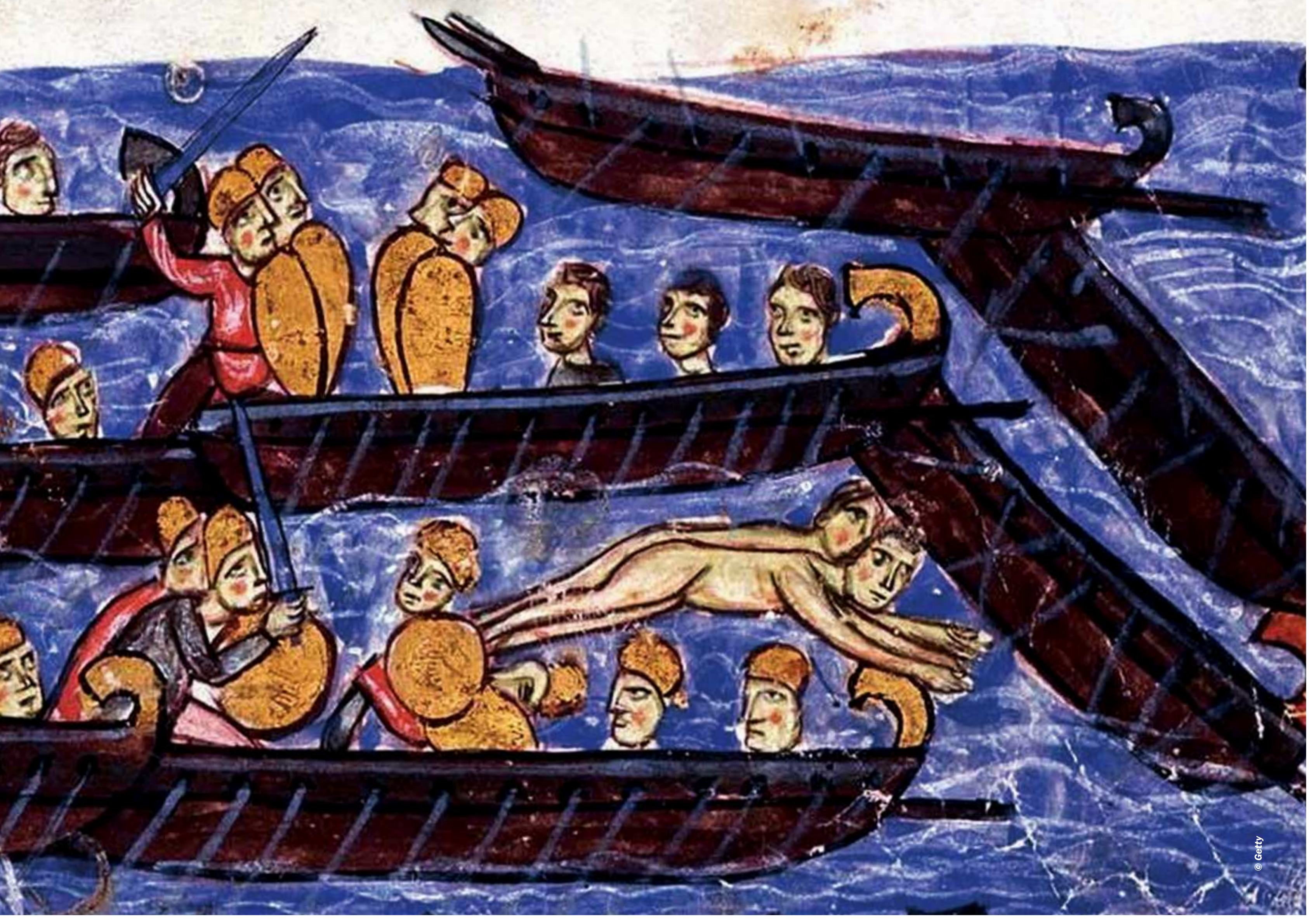


Image: Wiki / PD / Art

***Above:** It is still unknown exactly how 'Greek Fire' was made, but the incendiary weapon was extremely deadly during naval battles because the flames it produced could not be put out with water*



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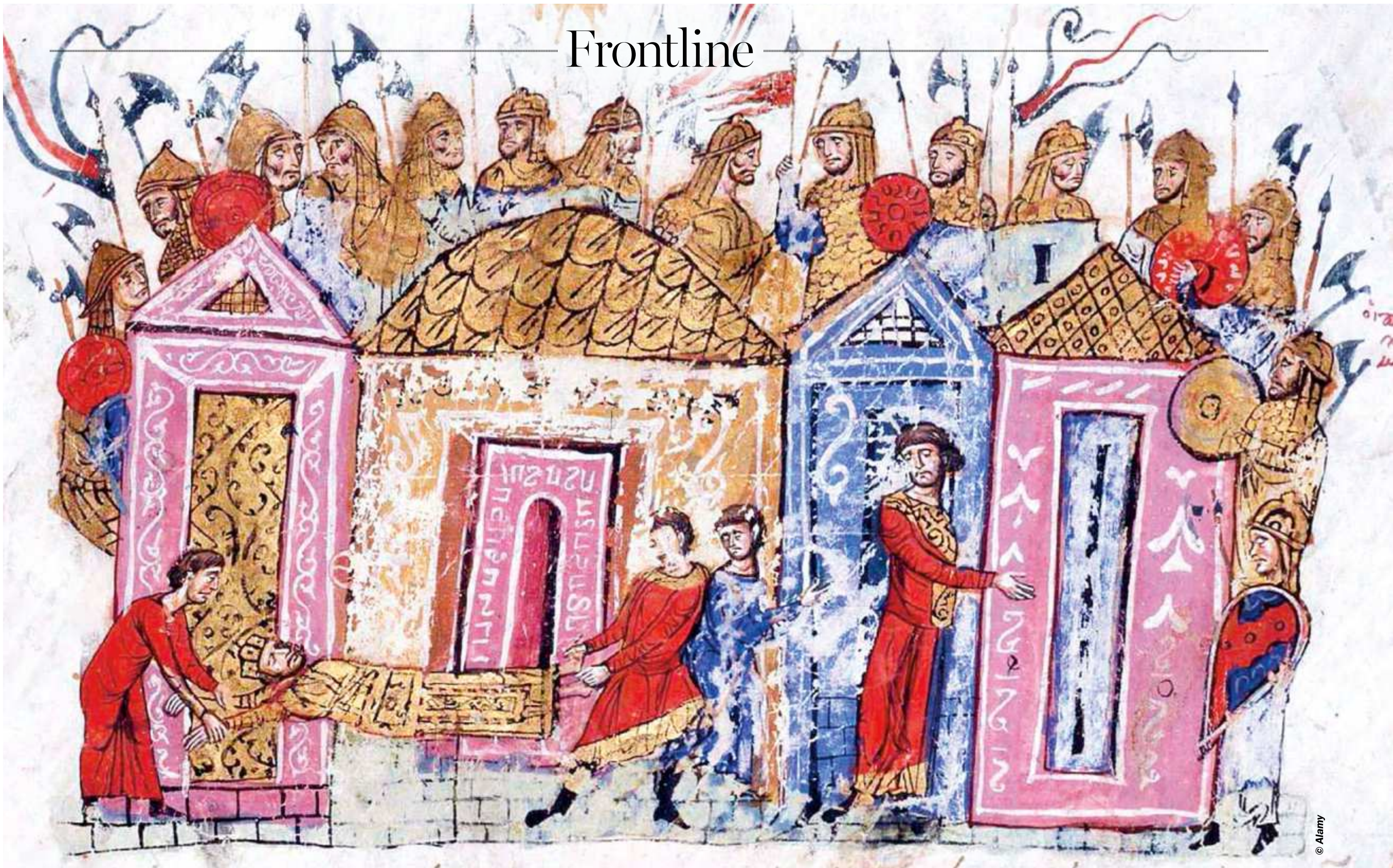

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Medieval depiction of the Varangian Guard, who would ultimately fail to win the Battle of Dyrrhachium for the Byzantine emperor

DYRRHACHIUM

NORMANS VS BYZANTINES

When Emperor Alexius Comnenus marched to confront the Norman warlord Robert Guiscard, his formidable Varangians learned the hard way that too much aggression could be a major weakness in battle

When Alexius Comnenus ascended the throne on 4 April 1081 at 24 years old he was already a proven general – since his first battle at 14 he had not yet seen defeat. But the capable young military commander inherited an empire that was a shadow of its former self. The defeat at Manzikert a decade before had dealt a savage blow that the Byzantines would never truly recover from.

Across the Adriatic Sea, Robert Guiscard smelled blood in the water like a predatory shark. The Norman duke may have known of the martial prowess of the new emperor, but it would not deter him in the slightest. Well aware of the chaos within the borders of the empire prior to Comnenus' ascension, Guiscard felt that Constantinople was ripe for the picking, especially for a superb general like himself. Since the previous summer, the duke had been preparing for his campaign and had raised an army of several thousand foot troops around a core of 1,300 elite Norman knights. In May 1081, the army and the fleet were ready to set sail for the Byzantine Empire.

The huge imperial army raised by Comnenus outnumbered the Norman forces and was made up of several different contingents. Among them were the emperor's ferocious bodyguards, the Varangians. Once comprised of just Rus and Scandinavian Vikings, the formidable unit received an influx of exiled Anglo-Saxon warriors after the Norman conquest of England in 1066. Many of these men were furious over the loss of their homeland and were out for blood. Guiscard and his men were not the Normans responsible, but that did not matter one bit to the vengeful exiles.

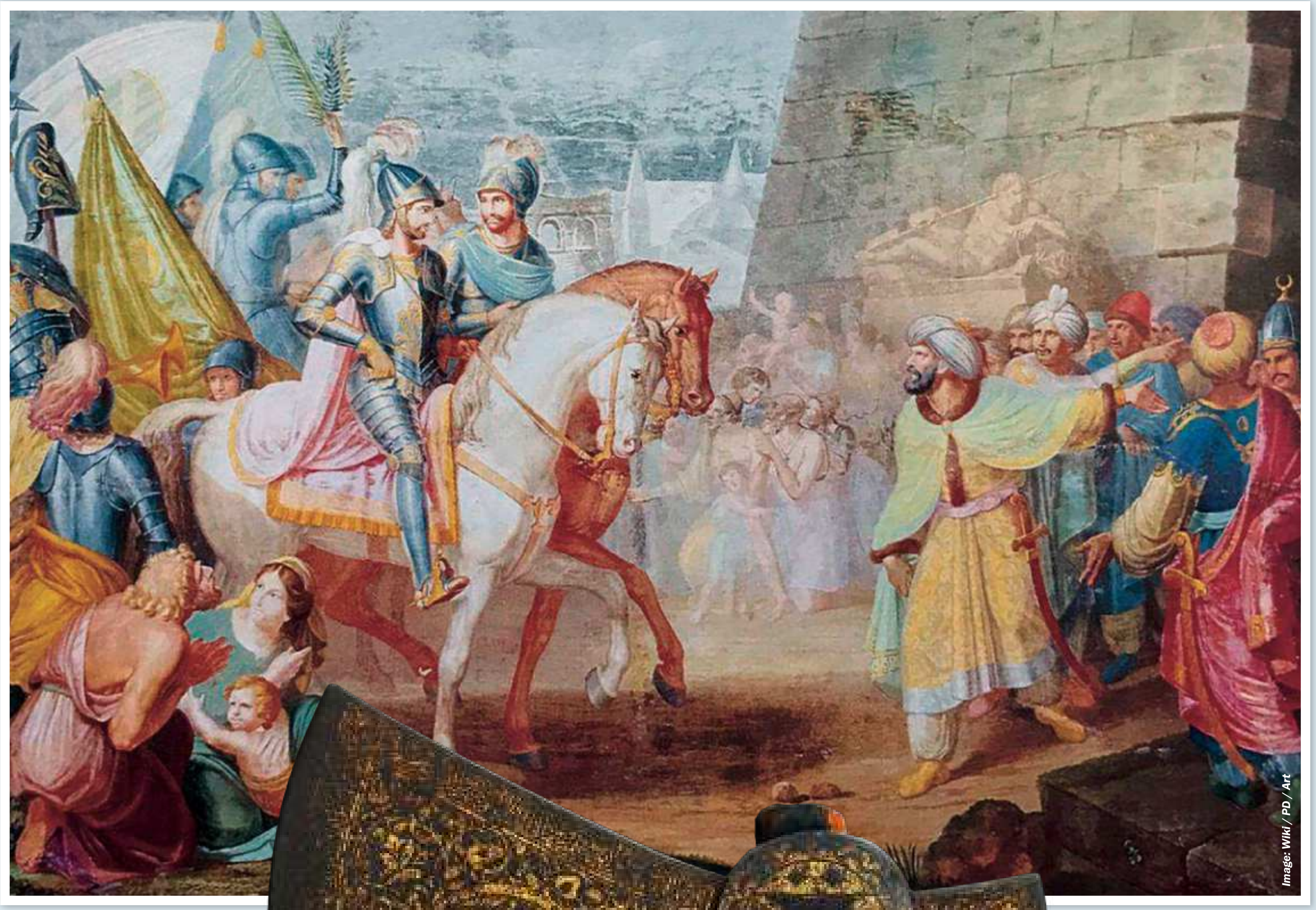
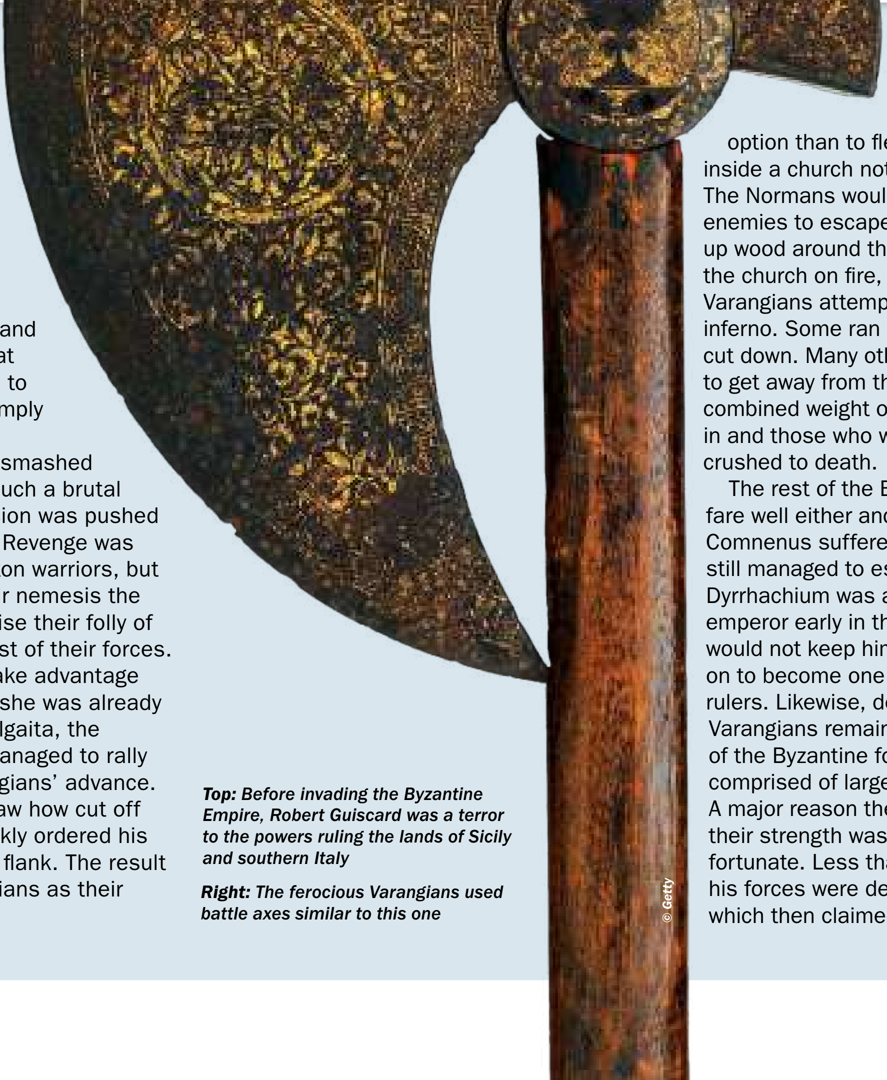


Image: Wiki / PD / Art

The two forces confronted each other on 18 October 1081 outside the walls of Dyrrhachium (in present-day Albania). Front and centre of the Byzantine army was the Varangian Guard, with the support of horse-archers behind them. Guiscard began the fighting when he ordered a unit of cavalrymen to charge forward and attempt a clever feigned retreat manoeuvre, though they failed to carry out the ruse and were simply repelled by the horse-archers.

The fierce Varangians then smashed into the enemy infantry with such a brutal assault that the Norman division was pushed back to the nearby shoreline. Revenge was within reach for the Anglo-Saxon warriors, but in their eagerness to slay their nemesis the elite guardsmen failed to realise their folly of advancing far ahead of the rest of their forces. The Normans were quick to take advantage of the situation. Even though she was already wounded in the fighting Sichelgaita, the legendary wife of Guiscard, managed to rally the troops and halt the Varangians' advance. At the same time, Guiscard saw how cut off the guardsmen were and quickly ordered his men to assault their exposed flank. The result was a disaster for the Varangians as their entire line collapsed.



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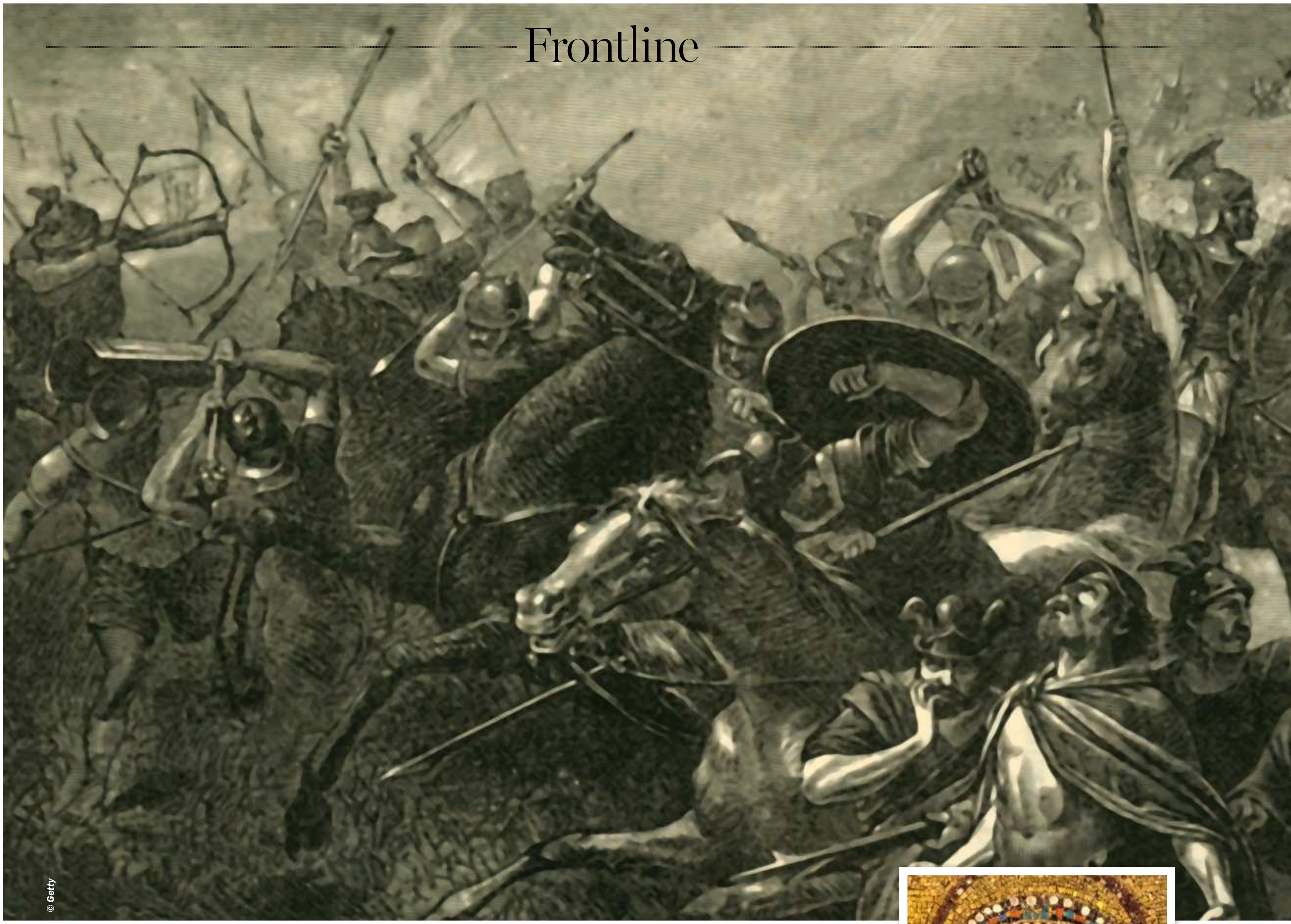
Top: *Before invading the Byzantine Empire, Robert Guiscard was a terror to the powers ruling the lands of Sicily and southern Italy*

Right: *The ferocious Varangians used battle axes similar to this one*

Utterly exhausted from fighting in their heavy armour, the surviving guardsmen had no other option than to flee and barricade themselves inside a church not far from the battlefield. The Normans would not allow their bloodthirsty enemies to escape so easily and began to pile up wood around the building. Then after setting the church on fire, the Normans waited as the Varangians attempted to break free from the inferno. Some ran out, only to be instantly cut down. Many others climbed to the rooftop to get away from the flames. However, the combined weight of the men caused it to cave in and those who were not burned alive were crushed to death.

The rest of the Byzantine army did not fare well either and the battle was lost. Comnenus suffered a wound to the head but still managed to escape capture. Although Dyrrhachium was a major defeat for the young emperor early in this reign, the experience would not keep him down and he would go on to become one of the empire's greatest rulers. Likewise, despite their heavy losses the Varangians remained a powerful component of the Byzantine forces and continued to be comprised of large numbers of Englishmen. A major reason these men could regain their strength was that Guiscard was not so fortunate. Less than five years after the battle his forces were devastated by an epidemic, which then claimed his life on 17 July 1085.



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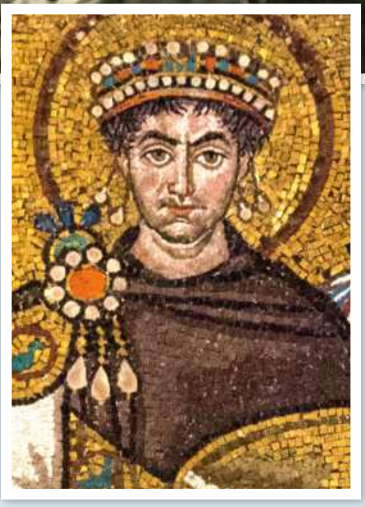

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RECONQUERING THE EMPIRE

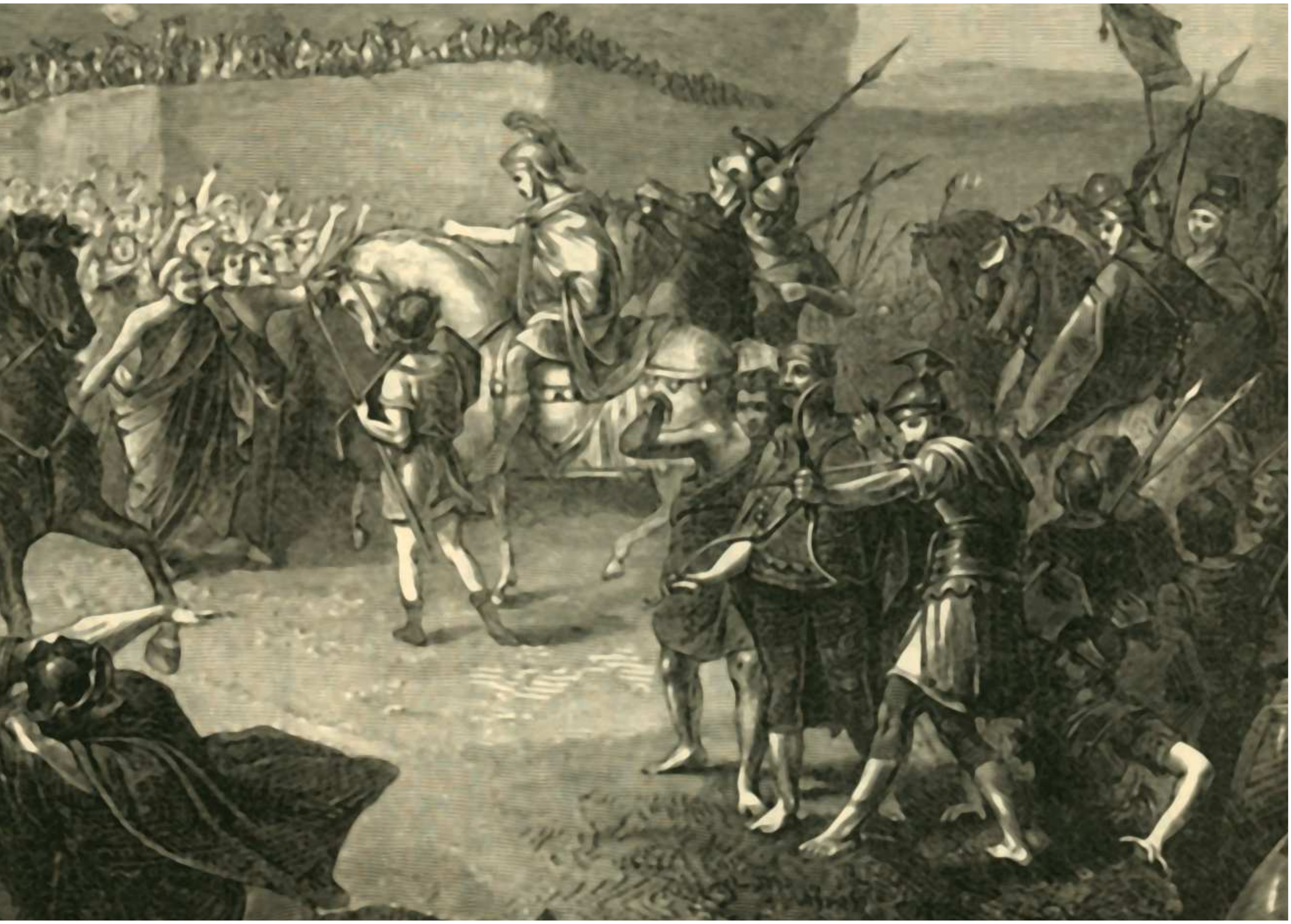
Justinian did more than any other emperor to restore the former Roman Empire, but it was ultimately all in vain

The last truly Latin emperor of the eastern Romans, Justinian I, managed to take back Italy and North Africa, but at great expense to the Byzantine Empire

When Justinian ascended the throne in 527, the eastern Romans had lost control over the founding city of Rome over 50 years before. Since the Byzantines always considered themselves as Romans even from their new capital at Constantinople, it was a top priority to reclaim not just Rome but also the other former territories in the west. To accomplish this vital goal, Justinian turned to the most talented and trusted generals under his command, Belisarius and Narses.

After Belisarius won a massive victory against the Sassanid Persians at Dara in 530, he was the most logical choice for the Byzantines' first campaign to conquer North Africa from the Vandal Kingdom. The young general quickly proved his worth once again since only a year after leaving with his forces in 533, Belisarius defeated King Gelimer and crushed his Germanic kingdom. Belisarius' success in North Africa left him free to then take the more symbolic prizes of Italy and Rome.

In 535, Justinian chose Belisarius to lead the Byzantine forces against the Ostrogothic



***Above:** An anachronistic, 19th-century depiction of Belisarius' entry into Rome, during the Gothic War*

Kingdom occupying Italy, but the seeds of jealousy had already been planted. As happens so often throughout history, the general's great successes caused the emperor to begin to see him as a political threat. But at this point, Justinian still believed Belisarius was the right man for the job and provided him with an army of 7,500 soldiers.

Using his signature military brilliance, Belisarius conquered Sicily and southern Italy, and finally won back Rome in December 536. However, the Ostrogothic Kingdom remained in the north of the peninsula. While the general continued his campaign to rid Italy of this Germanic enemy, Justinian sent more troops to assist in the endeavour under the command of the elderly eunuch, Narses, in 539. Although he would also prove to be a more than capable military commander, Narses was ordered to go to Italy for one simple reason: Justinian trusted the eunuch more than Belisarius, so his task was to keep the young general in check.

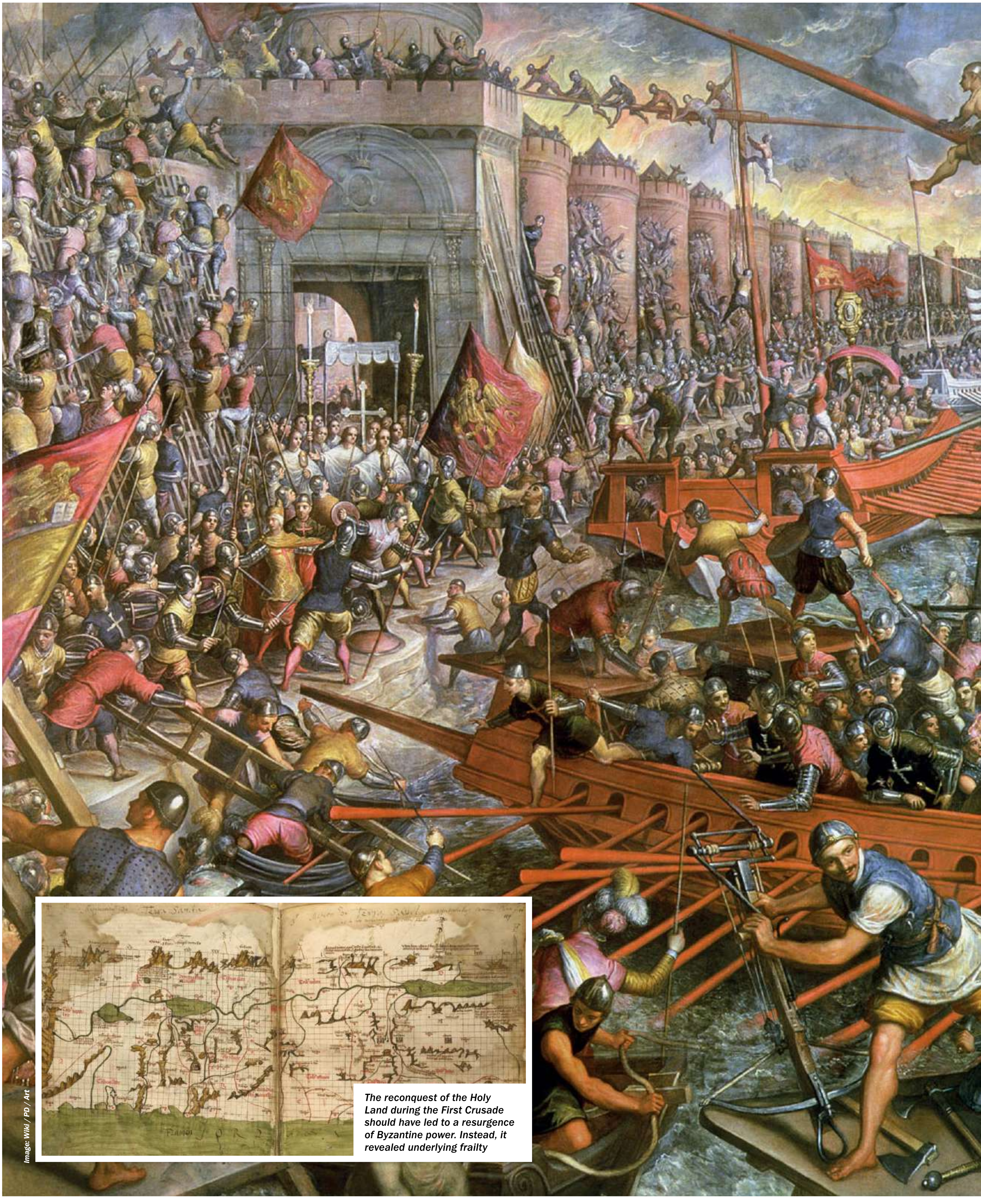
The emperor's growing mistrust of Belisarius threw a wrench in the gears of the ongoing campaign, causing the Byzantines to lose some of the gains they'd made. But even though he was forced to move forward with one hand tied behind his back, Belisarius still managed to take Ravenna in 540 after Narses was recalled to Constantinople. The Byzantines had finally reconquered Italy, or so it seemed.

Belisarius was not far behind Narses in leaving the peninsula because Justinian needed his best general to deal with the renewed Persian threat in the east. But leaving Italy turned out to be a massive mistake. The new Ostrogothic king, Totila, who rose to power in the Byzantines' absence, had a far cleverer strategy than his predecessors. Instead of seeking the support of the nobility (many of which remained loyal to the empire), Totila got the common people on his side. The Italians hadn't lived under Roman rule for almost a century, but they had almost as little cultural connection to the Greek-speaking Byzantines. When Belisarius returned in 544, he found himself fighting both the Ostrogoths and the rest of the native populace. The general did seize Rome once more yet had little success other than that.

Justinian and Belisarius eventually resolved their longstanding issues, but that did not stop the general from being recalled back to Constantinople in 548 before he could defeat Totila. However, a major reason for Belisarius' failure in his second Italian campaign was the emperor's refusal to dedicate the necessary manpower to the cause. When Justinian finally raised a large enough army after losing Rome again in 550, he put Narses in charge of the Byzantine forces.

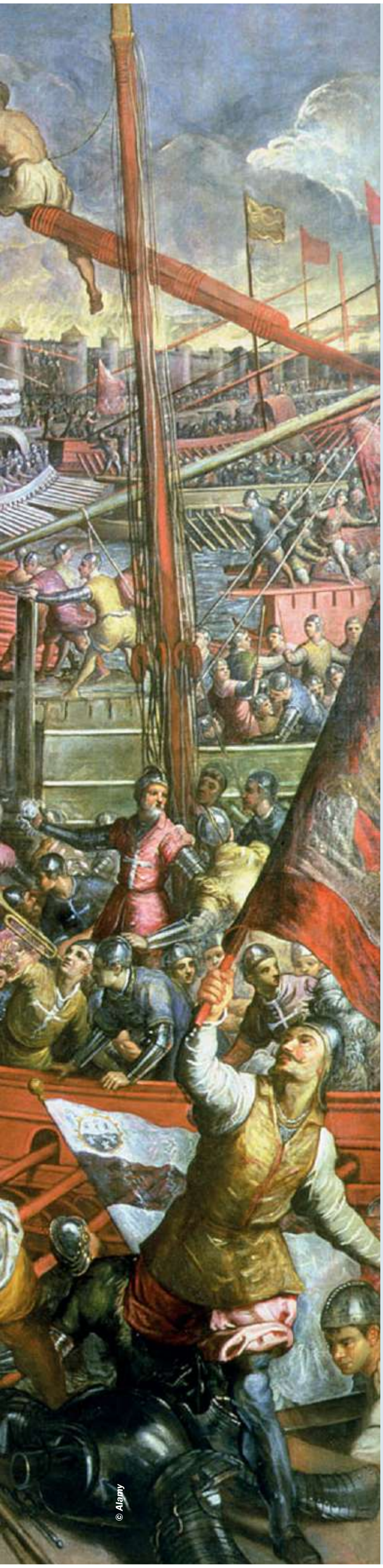
Now in his 70s, Narses may seem like an odd choice. However, the eunuch commander did not let his emperor down. In 552, Narses moved to Italy with over 20,000 troops and set up in a highly defensible position at Tadinae, knowing that Totila would come to meet him. When the king tried to goad them out, the Byzantines stood their ground. The massive cavalry force of the Germanic army then charged at the Byzantine line, but the stalwart defenders easily repelled their attackers. The Roman cavalry then attacked the exposed flank of the Ostrogoths to devastating effect. Totila was killed in the aftermath, along with 6,000 of his men.

Narses had finally crushed the Ostrogothic Kingdom and reclaimed Italy. And Justinian died content with his reunited empire in 565. However, 14 years of fighting had ravaged the peninsula and drained the imperial coffers. When new enemies like the Berbers and the Lombards entered the fray only years later, all the gains the Byzantines had made in Italy and North Africa slowly faded away.



The reconquest of the Holy Land during the First Crusade should have led to a resurgence of Byzantine power. Instead, it revealed underlying frailty

Image: Wiki / PD / Art



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Frontline

FALL OF THE EMPIRE

In 1453 the total collapse and destruction of the Byzantine Empire seemed unimaginable. In truth, that fall had been long overdue

Throughout its history of over 1000 years, the Byzantine Empire waxed and waned. It reached its greatest extent under Justinian I (r.527-565), and over the ensuing centuries the territory it controlled throughout the Mediterranean Sea fluctuated. By the middle of the 15th century, however, the empire had experienced centuries of decline, especially after the defeat of the Byzantines to the Seljuk Turks at the Battle of Manzikert in 1070.

That battle saw the loss of large tracts of the Levant and Anatolia. It also saw the Byzantine emperor, Romanus IV, captured and the empire plunged into a decade of civil war. The aftermath of that civil conflict also saw the new Byzantine emperor, Alexius I Comnenus (r.1080-1118), appeal for help from the rulers of western Europe.

This appeal led to the Crusades (the First from 1096-99) to reclaim the Holy Land (the territory encompassed by Israel, Palestine, and parts of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria) for Christianity. The First Crusade was an immense success: it recaptured Jerusalem and led to the creation of the Crusader States also known as Outremer (the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Principality of Antioch, the County of Edessa and the County of Tripoli).

While this success did also see the renewed expansion of Byzantine territory, it actually masked the weakness that had necessitated Alexius' appeal. The Byzantine Empire was no longer a dominant military power and required allies to prop up her former glory. The Byzantine army was defeated and humiliated more than once in this period, showing that her best days were behind her. What is more, her allies were highly unreliable. They were petty, selfish and soon fell to internecine fighting among themselves. They also held no affection for the Byzantine Empire: none of them considered themselves part of the former Roman Empire of which the Byzantines saw themselves as the successors.

Instead, those unreliable allies viewed themselves as wholly independent, equal and, perhaps most importantly, different. Although they were Christian allies against the seemingly unstoppable Muslim conquests of the Near East, the western allies also saw themselves as distinct to the Byzantines. The kingdoms of Western Europe were Latin Catholics, different from the Greek Orthodox Byzantines.

This tension and the unreliability of the Byzantines' western allies was vividly demonstrated by the Fourth Crusade (1202-1204). Rather than attempt to recapture Jerusalem and attack Egypt, the western crusaders instead sacked Constantinople itself. This was a disaster of momentous proportions and something which further demonstrated the Byzantine Empire's decline.

This inability to prevent her allies sacking her capital led to a partitioning of the remaining Byzantine possessions between the Franks and the Byzantines. The partitioning established the Republic of Venice and the Latin Empire, based in Constantinople (intended to replace the Byzantine Empire). The former Byzantines established states in Nicaea (in eastern Anatolia), Trebizond (territory along the coast of the Black Sea) and Epirus (in Albania and western Greece).

The remainder of the 13th century saw the Byzantines fighting their former allies and winning back control of the lands lost by 1261 to re-establish a Greek emperor on the throne. However, this was no revival of Byzantine fortunes. Outremer was entirely defeated by Muslim conquest by 1291: Edessa had fallen in 1144, Antioch in 1268, Jerusalem fell to Saladin in 1287, Tripoli in 1289 and Acre in 1291.

The re-establishment of Byzantine control of Constantinople and the empire might have spelled a revival of Byzantine influence, but this was unfortunately (if predictably) not the case. The 14th century saw a series of civil wars between claimants to the Byzantine throne which squandered resources and men rather than face external threats. And they, in the end, would prove the Byzantine Empire's undoing.

The Ottoman emirate was founded in 1299 as a small principality (one of several) on the edge of Byzantine territory in north-western Anatolia. The Ottomans carved out an ever-growing empire in Anatolia and they excelled at siege warfare. When the Ottoman expansion reached Constantinople under the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II, the weakened Byzantine state met a young conqueror (Mehmed was only 21) at the head of an expanding empire. Shocking as it was, the fall of Constantinople in May 1453 could have occurred much sooner.

***Left:** The sacking of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade showed just how vulnerable and weak the Byzantines had become*

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Above: Patton was highly experienced in armoured warfare and used tanks to great effect in World War II

Right: Patton, pictured on 30 March, 1943, is regarded by many as the top US Army field commander of WWII

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PATTON

"OLD BLOOD & GUTS"

What drove the legendary leader to become one of the most successful – and controversial – commanders of World War II?

WORDS **MIKE HASKEW**

In the spring of 1945, Nazi Germany was in its death throes. As the last weeks of World War II in Europe played to their inevitable end, the US Third Army continued slashing across the German frontier and deep into the Reich.

At times, German troops mounted stiff resistance, and on 1 March the Third Army commander, General George S Patton Jr, received an order to bypass the city of Trier. It was too stoutly defended, the communication read, and would require four divisions to capture. A swift reply, more of a riposte, went out immediately.

“Have taken Trier with two divisions. Do you want me to give it back?”

The witty barb was vintage Patton. Since activating Third Army on 1 August, 1944, the general had conducted a lightning sweep across France, plunging into Germany, capturing hundreds of thousands of prisoners and inflicting a huge number of killed and wounded on the enemy. Ten days after receiving the “amusing” directive regarding Trier, Third Army had cleared the area north of the River Moselle and linked up with Seventh Army to the south in a rapid sweep through the Palatinate and the Saarland, bagging another 100,000 prisoners.

By the end of World War II in Europe Patton had burnished his reputation as a tough, hard-driving field commander who exhorted his troops relentlessly but had prepared them for the privations of extended combat with thorough training and rigid discipline. In short, he had seen his command posture – in both preparation and practice – pay huge dividends.

“Patton was arguably the top US Army field commander in the European Theater of Operations (ETO) in World War II,” observed Steven Zaloga, author of the book *George S. Patton: Leadership, Strategy, Conflict*. “Even when you compare him to solid performers such as William Simpson of Ninth US Army and Alexander Patch of Seventh US Army.”

Patton forged a record of combat command that was virtually unequalled among other Western Allied battlefield leaders. However, his legacy remains one of poignant paradox. Patton was an enigmatic figure, easily moved to tears, devoutly Christian, yet bombastic, vain and prone to fits of rage. Although he was an effective leader of men and a brilliant tactician, his own character flaws and the demons that dogged him throughout his life nearly proved his undoing while on the world stage during the greatest armed conflict in human history.

Dawn of destiny

When World War II broke out in Europe in 1939, Patton, the scion of an aristocratic family born in suburban Los Angeles, California, in 1885, was a veteran of 30 years’ service in the US Army. He was acknowledged as an expert in armoured warfare, a founding father of the deployment of tanks and their tactical use. His background included stints as a staff and cavalry officer, moving in social circles of the affluent and influential.

He had seen combat during the punitive expedition against Mexican outlaw Pancho Villa in 1916 and was wounded in combat during World War I. Both experiences were the direct result of a close association with General John J ‘Black Jack’ Pershing, who was once engaged to Patton’s sister. In Mexico, he had led a detachment of 10 soldiers that caught and killed three of Villa’s cohorts. Patton kept a set of spurs as a souvenir, and the corpses were strapped to the hoods of the Americans’ Dodge touring cars like game trophies.

Within months of US entry into World War II, American and British commanders prepared an offensive against the Axis in North Africa: Operation Torch. Patton was given command of the Western Task Force, including 33,000 combat infantrymen, landing near Casablanca,

***Right:** A US medic administers blood plasma to a wounded comrade during the Sicily campaign, code-named Operation Husky*

***Below:** M10 Wolverine tank destroyers from the 6th Armoured Division, VIII Corps United States Third Army advance through a ruined french street, 1944*

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Morocco, on 8 November, 1942. Within three days Patton's command had taken the city, and the general negotiated a cease-fire with the Vichy French defenders. Although there had been moments of difficulty and stiff resistance, the early operations were carried out efficiently.

Reversal and restoration

Despite the promising start, American forces were untried in combat against the battle-hardened veterans of the German Afrika Korps, led by legendary General Erwin Rommel. In February 1943, Rommel hit the Americans hard at the Battle of Kasserine Pass, driving deep into their lines before finally being halted. General Dwight D Eisenhower, overall Allied commander in North Africa, sacked General Lloyd Fredendall, the inept commander of the US II Corps, and called upon his old friend Patton to restore discipline and fighting spirit in the unit.

Patton responded with vigour and soon engineered the first American land victory against German forces in the war, at the Battle of El Guettar. "Patton's real test came in command of the defeated II Corps in Tunisia," noted Kevin Hymel, author of *Patton's War: An American General's Combat Leadership, Volume I: November 1942 – July 1944*. "In the north, his 1st Armoured Division proved a disappointment, unable to crack German defences. His 1st Infantry Division performed better, denying the Germans a victory at El Guettar and driving east. Patton had to resort to actually leading the entire 1st Infantry at

★★★★ PATTON IN WWI

As a young officer in the Great War he exhibited bravery in combat and became a pioneer of armoured warfare

When the United States entered World War I in April 1917, General John J Pershing was given command of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) that deployed to France. His protégé Patton arrived in Europe ahead of Pershing to tend to administrative duties and oversee initial troop training. During this period the young officer developed an interest in a formidable new weapon of war: the tank.

As a result Patton was detailed to observe French armoured training as well as the manufacture of the machines. He was then charged with establishing the AEF Tank School at Langres, responsible for training the first US tank soldiers. The US Army had no tanks of its own and the Americans utilised Renault models purchased from the French.

Patton soon led the American 304th Tank Brigade in the US Army's first documented use of armour in wartime, supporting attacks by the 1st and 42nd Infantry Divisions near Saint Mihiel on 12 September, 1918. Patton led from the front, personally directing his tanks across a bridge that had possibly been mined by the Germans. He earned a reprimand for dangerously exposing himself to enemy fire and for being out of communication with higher levels of command for an extended period. He was said to have also met Brigadier General Douglas MacArthur, chief of staff of the 42nd Division, on the field that day.

Heeding his earlier reprimand, Patton devised a system of homing pigeons and runners to keep superior officers informed as future combat progressed. He also learned valuable lessons, including the fact that tanks advancing over muddy ground consumed more fuel than those on dry terrain, and subsequently developed a towed sled to deliver fuel to tanks operating in forward areas.

On 26 September, Patton was again in action with the tanks of the 304th, supporting the advance of the 28th and 35th Infantry Divisions in the Meuse-Argonne sector. The fighting was intense, and Patton again placed himself in harm's way, inadvertently moving ahead of adjacent friendly forces to within 40 metres of a snarl of German machine-gun nests. He was seriously wounded when a bullet ripped into his leg and spent agonising hours in a shell hole before evacuation. During the operation 25 enemy machine-gun positions were destroyed and Patton received the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism, despite his command taking 90 percent casualties and losing virtually all of its tanks by the end of September.

With the end of the Great War, Patton was one of only a handful of American officers experienced in armoured warfare, and he had already begun to formulate tactics and battlefield perspective that would serve him well a generation later during World War II.

Lieutenant Colonel Patton stands in front a French Renault FT light tank near the city of Bourg in 1918

***Below:** Photographed in 1919, Patton became a prominent advocate of a standing armoured force in the US Army*

Images: Wiki / PD / Gov

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least three times, driving in his command vehicle ahead of the troops through minefields for miles, until they finally rendezvoused with British forces."

As Allied victory was realised in North Africa, Patton was given command of the US Seventh Army in preparation for Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily on 9 July, 1943. The role of Seventh Army was to land at the beaches near Gela and protect the left flank of the British Eighth Army, under General Bernard Montgomery, in its offensive from Syracuse to the port of Messina, gateway to the Italian mainland.

Patton did not relish the idea of playing second fiddle to Montgomery, or any other commander for that matter. When the opportunity presented itself, he aggressively pushed northwest from his positions in Sicily, subsequently gaining permission from General Sir Harold Alexander, commander of the 15th Army Group, to capture the city of Palermo if practicable. Seventh Army took Palermo on 21 July, and Patton set his sights on Messina. A sometimes heated rivalry with Montgomery developed, and in his zeal to win the race to the city Patton ordered a series of amphibious operations to outflank German defensive positions. Although these led to heavy casualties, Messina fell to Seventh Army on 16 August. The triumph was not only a significant feat of arms, it also fed Patton's massive ego and thirst for acclaim.

"Patton's greatest victories came in Sicily and the European continent," observed Hymel. "With experience under his belt from North Africa, he conducted amphibious landings with mixed results, but it showed his willingness to improvise and keep the enemy off-balance. His constant attacks enabled him to reach Messina, signalling the end of the campaign."

Losing control

During the Sicily campaign Patton lived up to his nickname Old Blood and Guts. While many historians have taken him to task for the casualties sustained in ostensibly winning the race to Messina, it may be argued that his amphibious assaults and relentless attacks may actually have minimised casualties. Patton once said of the enemy: "As long as you attack them, they cannot find the time to attack you… You must never halt because some other unit is stuck. If you push on, you will relieve pressure on the adjacent unit, and it will accompany you."

Patton was intolerant of lacklustre performance and could not stand perceived cowardice. However, he was extremely emotional and at times lost control. Two incidents during the Sicily campaign illustrate this grave character flaw that nearly cost the great battlefield commander his career.

On 3 August, 1943, Patton was visiting an evacuation hospital in the Sicilian town of Nicosia when he came upon Private Charles H Kuhl, who was suffering from combat fatigue. Patton flew into a rage when he was told that Kuhl had no physical wounds and slapped the soldier. A week later, the incident repeated itself when Patton slapped Private Paul G Bennett and hurled a string of profanities at the patient.

When word of the incidents reached General Eisenhower, the theatre command reprimanded Patton, who apologised to the individual soldiers, those present in the rooms when the incidents occurred and to units throughout Seventh Army. Although Eisenhower had hoped the incident would blow over, journalist Drew Pearson broke the story on his radio program, sparking a furore in the United States. Calls for Patton's removal were rampant, even among members of Congress.

***Below:** After coming ashore at Gela, Sicily, in July 1943, Patton points at a distant objective while issuing orders to surrounding officers*

Holding four-star rank late in his career, Patton was one of the most famous – not to mention outspoken – commanders of World War II

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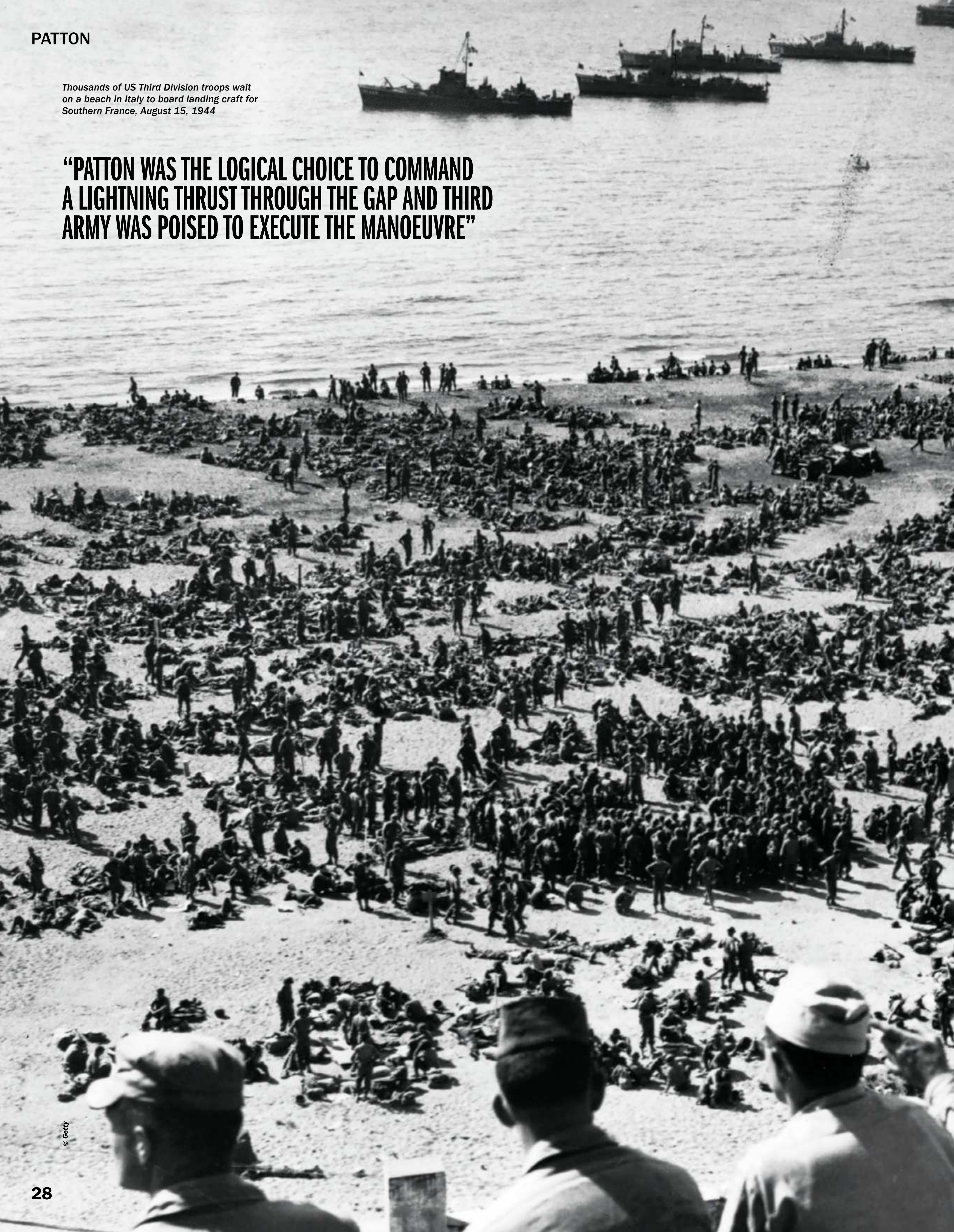

Thousands of US Third Division troops wait on a beach in Italy to board landing craft for Southern France, August 15, 1944

“PATTON WAS THE LOGICAL CHOICE TO COMMAND A LIGHTNING THRUST THROUGH THE GAP AND THIRD ARMY WAS POISED TO EXECUTE THE MANOEUVRE”

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Although Patton was deemed essential to the war effort due to his combat record, he was quietly relegated to the backwaters of Allied command during the preparations for Operation Overlord. General Omar Bradley, once Patton's subordinate, was given command of the US First Army and later 12th Army Group for the 6 June, 1944, invasion of Normandy and the campaign that followed.

Meanwhile, Patton was ordered to command the newly formed Third Army in January 1944, and set about training and equipping this force prior to entering combat. At the same time, he was the centre of an elaborate deception that worked beyond the wildest dreams of the Allied high command. The Germans respected Patton and his aggressive command style, and they fully expected him to lead the Allied invasion of northwestern France. The fictitious First US Army Group (FUSAG) was formed around Patton, even as he engaged in the training of Third Army. The deception was complete with the transmission of fake orders, leaks of false information that the Allies intended to land at the Pas-de-Calais rather than Normandy, and dummy inflatable trucks and tanks that appeared authentic to Nazi spies at a distance. Once the Germans realised that they had been deceived it was too late to commit sufficient forces to defeat the Allied foothold in Normandy.

Third Army unleashed

In the summer of 1944, the expansion of the Allied lodgment in Normandy was slowed by determined German resistance. On 25 July, the Allies launched Operation Cobra, a saturation bombing of the front in the vicinity of the French town of Saint Lo, followed by the

★★★★ OLD BLOOD & GUTS

Patton earned his nickname as an aggressive commander of American troops in World War II

Standing before a group of reporters during the Third Army's rapid drive across France in 1944, Patton was asked whether the offensive should be slowed to prevent heavier casualties. The general characteristically replied: "Whenever you slow anything down, you waste human lives." The general later remarked that "blood and brains" were required to win in armed conflict, and an enterprising correspondent began referring to Patton as "Blood and Guts". The nickname stuck, morphing into "Old Blood and Guts."

The moniker implies that Patton was less than judicious in his willingness to accept casualties to achieve victory – and he actually made statements that gave credibility to such sentiment. Compounding this impression were the simple facts that Patton craved the limelight. He was vainglorious, profane, racist, anti-Semitic and narcissistic. He had a penchant for strict discipline, and stories were widespread of him slapping soldiers hospitalised for battle fatigue and shooting a pair of mules that blocked the progress of an advancing troop column.

Yet this same combat soldier would argue that speed, tenacity and audacity on the battlefield actually saved lives. Character traits that might be deemed odious must also be juxtaposed with the acknowledgement that Patton was a deeply religious man, easily moved to tears and incredibly proud of the accomplishments of the men who served under him.

Patton visits wounded men of the 7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Division, awaiting evacuation from a field hospital

Patton awards the Silver Star to Private Ernest A Jenkins in October 1944

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Above: *Patton with Lieutenant Colonel Lyle Bernard, CO, 30th Infantry Division near Brolo, Sicily*

Left: *Troops of the Third US Army smash in the front door of a house to clear out German troops in Metz, France, 22 November, 1944*

Top: *Patton addresses soldiers gathered around his vehicle during the Third Army's advance across France*

Above: *After the relief of Bastogne in December 1944, Patton talks with General Anthony McAuliffe, acting commander of the 101st Airborne Division*

rapid exploitation of the anticipated breach in German lines.

Patton was the logical choice to command a lightning thrust through the gap, and Third Army was poised to execute the manoeuvre. During the first week of August, his troops captured the town of Avranches and then poured into Brittany: excellent tank country. Le Mans was captured on 8 August, and Patton advocated swift movement to trap the remnants of the German 7th and 5th Panzer Armies at Falaise. Bradley hesitated, unwilling to expose the flanks of Third Army to counterattack. When the Falaise Pocket finally closed, thousands of German troops were captured, but thousands more had escaped to continue fighting.

Third Army continued its dash across France, but supply and logistics issues ground the magnificent thrust to a halt. As the frustrated Patton finally resumed the offensive in the autumn, incessant rains plagued troop movements, turning roads into quagmires and allowing the Germans a respite from the relentless pressure that Third Army had exerted with such tremendous success.

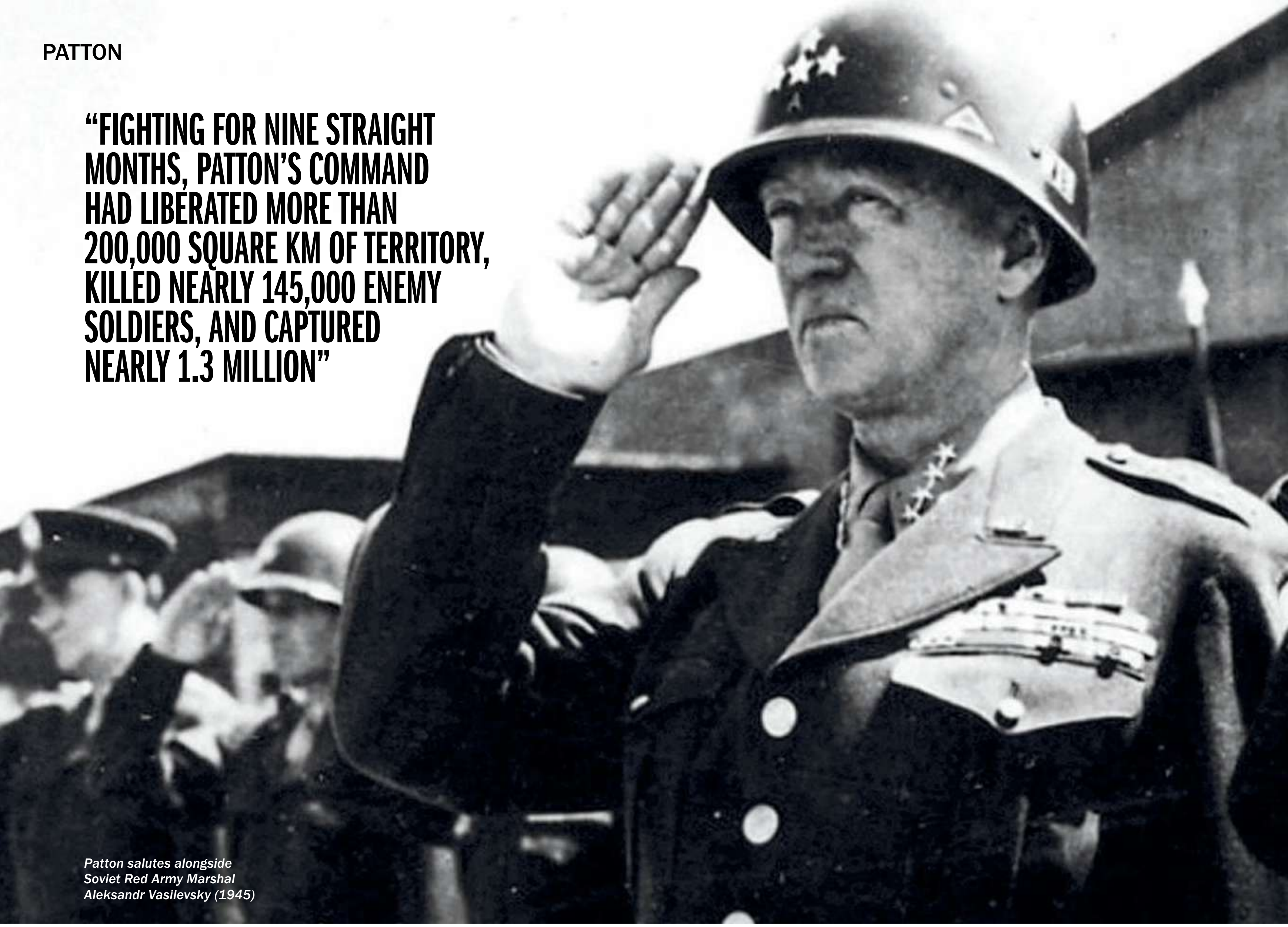
In early December, Patton summoned the Third Army chaplain, Monsignor James Hugh O'Neill, and asked for a "weather prayer". The chaplain responded that it was unusual to pray for fair weather to kill other human beings, but Patton would not be dissuaded. The subsequent prayer was combined with a Christmas greeting from the commanding general, and 250,000 copies were distributed among the ranks of Third Army.

The prayer read: "Almighty and most merciful Father, we humbly beseech Thee, of Thy great goodness, to restrain these immoderate rains with which we have had to contend. Grant us fair weather for Battle. Graciously hearken to us as soldiers who call Thee that, armed with Thy power, we may advance from victory to victory, and crush the oppression and wickedness of our enemies, and establish Thy justice among men and nations. Amen."

The rains slowed as Patton continued to advance through the Saar. However, within days the Germans launched their Ardennes Offensive: Hitler's last, desperate attempt to achieve victory in the West. The test of modern warfare that resulted was daunting, even for a commander such as Patton.

Glory and gravity

While Third Army's epic dash across France had brought Patton renewed fame, the German offensive that resulted in the Battle of the



"FIGHTING FOR NINE STRAIGHT MONTHS, PATTON'S COMMAND HAD LIBERATED MORE THAN 200,000 SQUARE KM OF TERRITORY, KILLED NEARLY 145,000 ENEMY SOLDIERS, AND CAPTURED NEARLY 1.3 MILLION"

Patton salutes alongside Soviet Red Army Marshal Aleksandr Vasilevsky (1945)

Bulge, the largest land engagement in American military history, sealed his place among the greatest of US Army field commanders.

Within days of the distribution of the famous weather prayer, the German breakthrough in the Ardennes had reached a critical stage. The 101st Airborne and elements of the 10th Armored Division were clinging to the vital crossroads town of Bastogne, Belgium, surrounded by the enemy. Possession of Bastogne was key to breaking the momentum of the enemy offensive, and on 19 December General Eisenhower called his lieutenants together at Verdun for a council of war.

The situation was dire, but a plan was cobbled together to reduce the German salient with flank attacks from north and south. Still, there was the problem of relieving Bastogne. Although Patton was already fighting again in the vicinity of Saarbrucken to the south, he pledged to attack toward the embattled Belgian town with three divisions in 48 hours. Eisenhower was amazed and replied: "Don't be fatuous, George!" Relishing the moment, Patton said that his staff had already been working on such a contingency plan.

Eisenhower had just received promotion to five-star general rank, and as the meeting closed he told Patton: "George, every time I get promoted, I get attacked." Patton grinned and replied: "Yes, and every time you get attacked I bail you out." The Third Army commander also turned to General Bradley and pronounced: "Brad, this time the Kraut's got his head in the meat grinder and I've got hold of the handle!"

Spearheading Patton's promised push, the 4th Armored Division made contact with the defenders of Bastogne on 26 December, lifting the siege. Patton overflowed with pride, writing to his wife: "The relief of Bastogne is the most brilliant operation we have thus far performed and is in my opinion the outstanding achievement of this war. Now the enemy must dance to our tune, not we to his… this is my biggest battle." As a group of correspondents crowded around, he told them: "It's a hell of a lot easier to sit on your rear end and wait than it is to fight into a place like this. Try to remember that when you write your books about this campaign. Remember the men who drove up that bowling alley out there…"

Hymel noted: "The fighting was intense and freezing as snow had begun falling all over Europe. Patton pushed his troops almost too hard, exhausting them, but he knew the harder he pushed them the quicker the campaign would be over. He relieved Bastogne and pushed north until reaching Houffalize on 25 January, 1945. He spent the next month regaining territory lost during the Bulge. Patton spent the month of March charging across Germany, crossing the Rhine River on 22 March. He then raced his army across the country, ending the war in Czechoslovakia."

At the end of March, however, Patton allowed personal feelings to cloud his judgment. His son-in-law, Lieutenant Colonel John Waters, had been captured in North Africa and was believed to be held with other American prisoners of war at Camp OFLAG XIII-B near the German town of Hammelburg. Patton was determined to liberate the prisoners and sent Task Force Baum (named for its commander, Captain Abraham Baum) 80km behind German lines to accomplish the task. The ill-conceived raid failed and was driven back with the loss of 26 killed and nearly all of the remaining 314 officers and men wounded, captured or missing. In addition, 57 tanks and armoured vehicles were destroyed.

Nevertheless, by the end of the war in Europe the combat record of Third Army was outstanding. Fighting for nine straight months, Patton's command had liberated more than 200,000 square kilometres of territory, killed nearly 145,000 enemy soldiers and captured nearly 1.3 million.

Despondency and death

With the end of the European war, Patton sought a command in the Pacific, but this was not to be. He was named military governor of Bavaria but refused to agree to wholesale

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Patton's coffin is borne to its final resting place in December 1945. He died of injuries sustained in a car crash

© Alamy

denazification, the removing of civilians who performed essential functions such as running public transportation and operating telephone switchboards, despite the fact that some of them had been members of the Nazi Party. Patton was also openly critical of the Soviet Union, still a military ally of the US and Great Britain, during press conferences and public speaking engagements. As a result, he was removed from command of Third Army in October 1945. His last assignment was command of the Fifteenth Army at Bad Nauheim, Germany, an outfit that was writing a history of the war.

In his diminished role Patton became despondent, and his chief of staff General Hobart Gay invited him to a pheasant hunt near the town of Speyer on 9 December in the hopes of cheering him up. That morning, Patton's 1938 Model 75 Cadillac limousine was proceeding toward the hunting party's destination when the driver of a 2½-ton army truck suddenly turned left in front of the Cadillac. The resulting collision caved in the front of the car, but General Gay and the two drivers were only slightly injured.

Patton, however, had been violently thrown into the overhead ceiling light and the glass and steel partition inside the vehicle. His nose was broken and much of his scalp was peeled back from his forehead. Worst of all, cervical vertebrae three and four had been broken and dislocated, injuring his spine and paralysing him from the neck down. Twelve days later, on 21 December, 1945, Patton died of congestive heart failure and pulmonary edema at the age of 60. On Christmas Eve, the general was buried in the American Military Cemetery in Hamm, Luxembourg. He had previously expressed wishes to be buried with soldiers he had led in battle.

Twenty-five years after his death, the film *Patton*, starring George C Scott, became a box office hit. Scott received the Academy Award for Best Actor and Patton's career became familiar to millions who otherwise might never have heard his name.

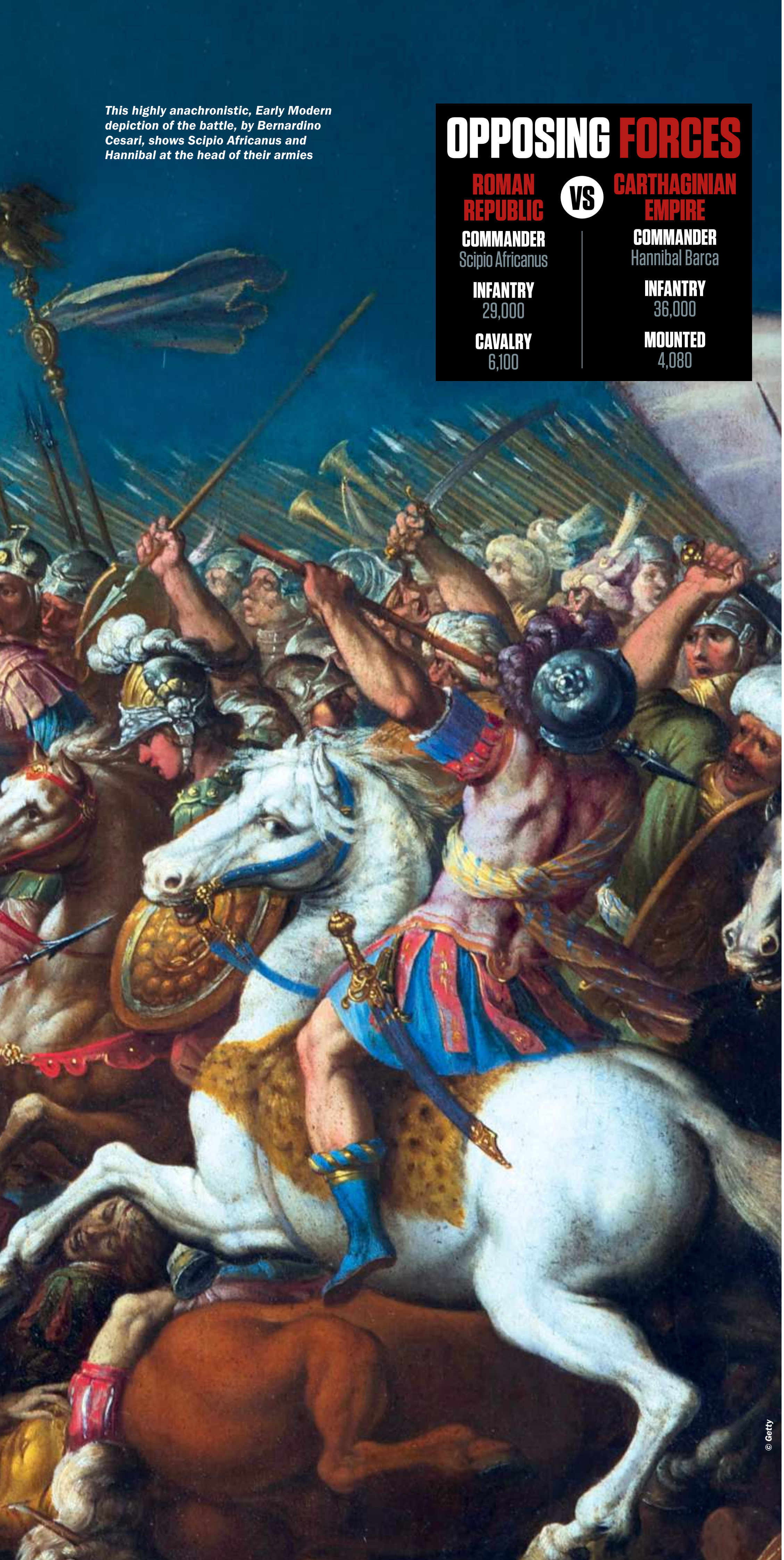
General George S Patton Jr, has remained a heroic yet controversial figure in the annals of the American military. His legacy is one of outstanding command achievement and disconcerting character flaws, a fascinating contradiction. His record is worthy of both praise and criticism – how much of each is assigned to the verdict of history.

ZAMA, CARTHAGE 19 OCTOBER 202 BCE

ZAMA

Led by a fearless and ambitious young commander, Rome's bloody victory over the Carthaginians finally put an end to the Second Punic War

WORDS **CHARLES GINGER**



This highly anachronistic, Early Modern depiction of the battle, by Bernardino Cesari, shows Scipio Africanus and Hannibal at the head of their armies

© Getty

OPPOSING FORCES

ROMAN REPUBLIC	VS	CARTHAGINIAN EMPIRE
COMMANDER Scipio Africanus		**COMMANDER** Hannibal Barca
INFANTRY 29,000		**INFANTRY** 36,000
CAVALRY 6,100		**MOUNTED** 4,080

By the time they faced each other on the sun-scorched sands of Zama the Mediterranean powerhouses of Rome and Carthage had been at war with one another for 62 years (although there were stretches of 'peace'). Yet while tensions in the region had always made a decisive encounter between these two titans inevitable, the timing of this one in 202 BCE was accelerated by flagrant Carthaginian opportunism.

Since audaciously crossing the Alps and descending into northern Italy in 218 BCE, Hannibal's army had terrorised the peninsular relentlessly, inflicting a series of catastrophic defeats upon a dumbstruck Rome that saw Carthage gain the advantage in the early years of the Second Punic War. Yet Rome refused to surrender in the face of these crushing setbacks, somehow holding its nerve following the almost total evisceration of an entire army at the Battle of Cannae in 216 BCE. Critically for the future of this mammoth tussle, one of the few Romans to escape Hannibal's trap at Cannae was a promising young soldier named Publius Cornelius Scipio.

Born into an Etruscan family in 236 BCE, Scipio was seemingly destined for a life serving Rome on the battlefield due to his lineage. His father, with whom he shared a name, had served as consul (the highest elected position in the Roman Republic), and in 218 BCE he took his 18-year-old son with him when he marched to confront Hannibal's newly arrived force in northern Italy. In the winter of that year the Romans faced their invaders at the Battle of Ticinus, a clash that saw them soundly beaten by Hannibal's rapid cavalry and Publius Cornelius saved from certain death by his son riding to his rescue.

Subsequent defeats at Trebbia and Cannae sent panic rippling through Italy, with the prospect of Hannibal marching on Rome a growing possibility in frenzied Roman minds. Scipio's father prudently attempted to sever Hannibal's supply lines in a bid to isolate him, but he was cut down along with his other son, Gnaeus Scipio, while campaigning against Carthaginian interests in Spain in 212 BCE.

Still grieving the loss of his father and sibling, Scipio returned to Rome. Yet he would not let his father's defeat or personal suffering stunt his progress. Determined to avenge his fallen relatives, Scipio boldly volunteered to lead a fresh assault on Spain and reclaim the mineral- and labour-rich territory for Rome. His drive and ambition must have come as some relief to the rest of Rome's commanders, for none of them were willing to raise their hand and lead a campaign widely deemed to be a suicide mission.

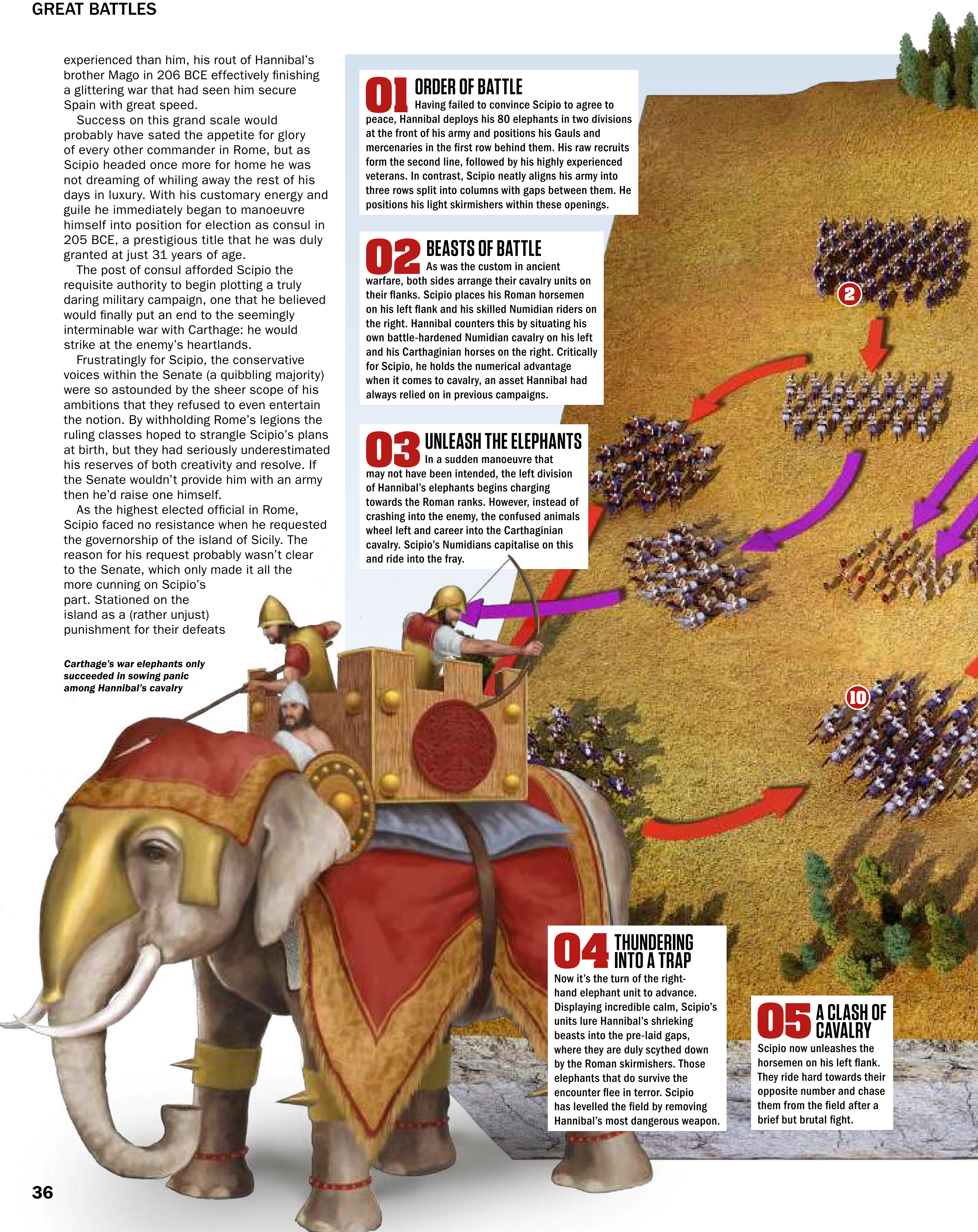
Supported by 10,000 footsoldiers and 1,000 horsemen, Scipio, who was by now still only 25, landed his invasion force in northeast Spain in 211 BCE. He wasted little time in harassing the Carthaginian rulers of the region, and by 209 BCE he'd fought his way to Carthago Nova (New Carthage) in the south and taken the city, along with its vast wealth. This was followed up with victory in 208 BCE at Baecula and then another triumph at the Battle of Ilipa in spring 206 BCE. On both occasions Scipio outfoxed generals far more experienced than him, his rout of Hannibal's brother Mago in 206 BCE effectively finishing a glittering war that had seen him secure Spain with great speed.

Success on this grand scale would probably have sated the appetite for glory of every other commander in Rome, but as Scipio headed once more for home he was not dreaming of whiling away the rest of his days in luxury. With his customary energy and guile he immediately began to manoeuvre himself into position for election as consul in 205 BCE, a prestigious title that he was duly granted at just 31 years of age.

The post of consul afforded Scipio the requisite authority to begin plotting a truly daring military campaign, one that he believed would finally put an end to the seemingly interminable war with Carthage: he would strike at the enemy's heartlands.

Frustratingly for Scipio, the conservative voices within the Senate (a quibbling majority) were so astounded by the sheer scope of his ambitions that they refused to even entertain the notion. By withholding Rome's legions the ruling classes hoped to strangle Scipio's plans at birth, but they had seriously underestimated his reserves of both creativity and resolve. If the Senate wouldn't provide him with an army then he'd raise one himself.

As the highest elected official in Rome, Scipio faced no resistance when he requested the governorship of the island of Sicily. The reason for his request probably wasn't clear to the Senate, which only made it all the more cunning on Scipio's part. Stationed on the island as a (rather unjust) punishment for their defeats



Carthage's war elephants only succeeded in sowing panic among Hannibal's cavalry

01 ORDER OF BATTLE

Having failed to convince Scipio to agree to peace, Hannibal deploys his 80 elephants in two divisions at the front of his army and positions his Gauls and mercenaries in the first row behind them. His raw recruits form the second line, followed by his highly experienced veterans. In contrast, Scipio neatly aligns his army into three rows split into columns with gaps between them. He positions his light skirmishers within these openings.

02 BEASTS OF BATTLE

As was the custom in ancient warfare, both sides arrange their cavalry units on their flanks. Scipio places his Roman horsemen on his left flank and his skilled Numidian riders on the right. Hannibal counters this by situating his own battle-hardened Numidian cavalry on his left and his Carthaginian horses on the right. Critically for Scipio, he holds the numerical advantage when it comes to cavalry, an asset Hannibal had always relied on in previous campaigns.

03 UNLEASH THE ELEPHANTS

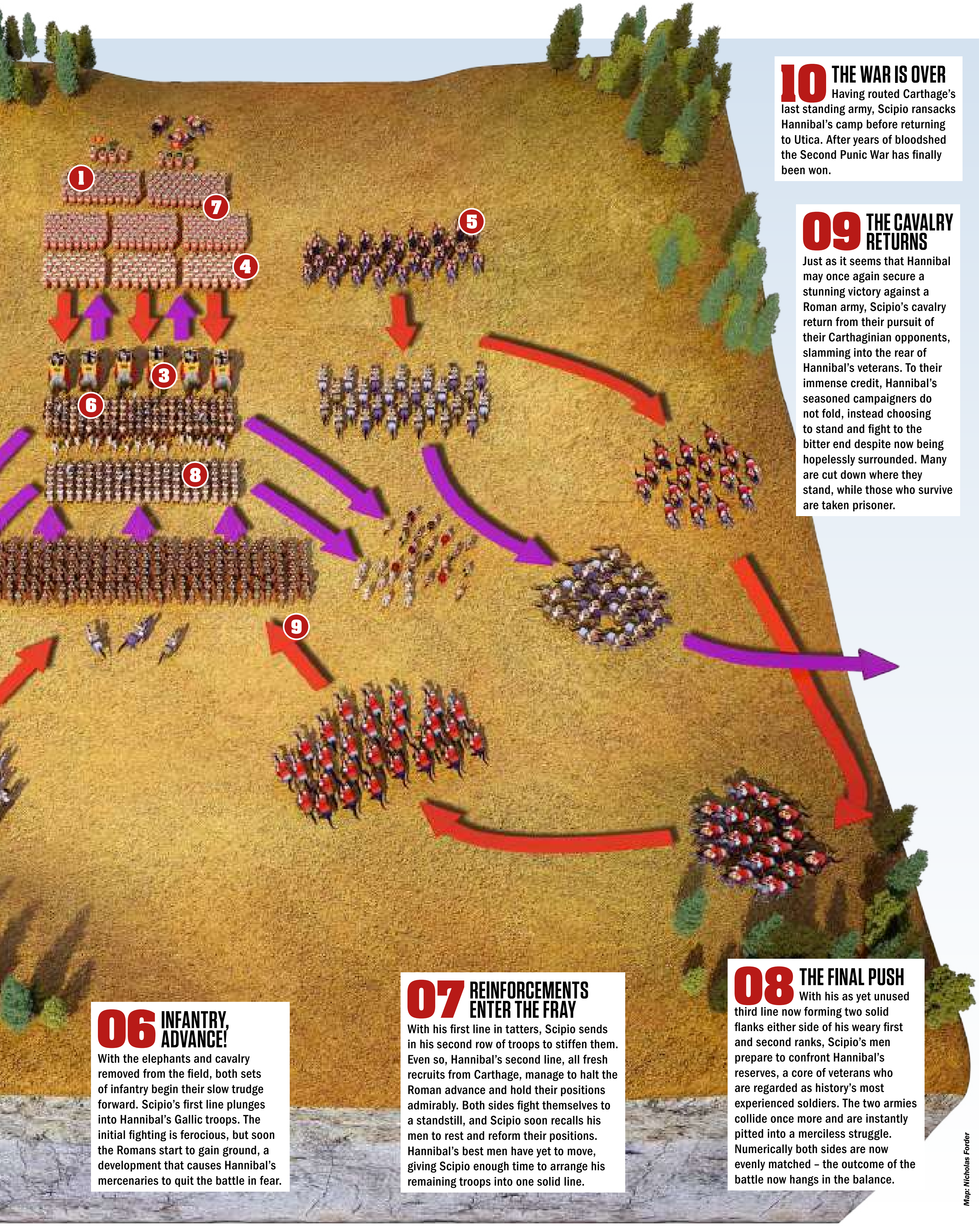
In a sudden manoeuvre that may not have been intended, the left division of Hannibal's elephants begins charging towards the Roman ranks. However, instead of crashing into the enemy, the confused animals wheel left and career into the Carthaginian cavalry. Scipio's Numidians capitalise on this and ride into the fray.

04 THUNDERING INTO A TRAP

Now it's the turn of the right-hand elephant unit to advance. Displaying incredible calm, Scipio's units lure Hannibal's shrieking beasts into the pre-laid gaps, where they are duly scythed down by the Roman skirmishers. Those elephants that do survive the encounter flee in terror. Scipio has levelled the field by removing Hannibal's most dangerous weapon.

05 A CLASH OF CAVALRY

Scipio now unleashes the horsemen on his left flank. They ride hard towards their opposite number and chase them from the field after a brief but brutal fight.



06 INFANTRY, ADVANCE!

With the elephants and cavalry removed from the field, both sets of infantry begin their slow trudge forward. Scipio's first line plunges into Hannibal's Gallic troops. The initial fighting is ferocious, but soon the Romans start to gain ground, a development that causes Hannibal's mercenaries to quit the battle in fear.

07 REINFORCEMENTS ENTER THE FRAY

With his first line in tatters, Scipio sends in his second row of troops to stiffen them. Even so, Hannibal's second line, all fresh recruits from Carthage, manage to halt the Roman advance and hold their positions admirably. Both sides fight themselves to a standstill, and Scipio soon recalls his men to rest and reform their positions. Hannibal's best men have yet to move, giving Scipio enough time to arrange his remaining troops into one solid line.

08 THE FINAL PUSH

With his as yet unused third line now forming two solid flanks either side of his weary first and second ranks, Scipio's men prepare to confront Hannibal's reserves, a core of veterans who are regarded as history's most experienced soldiers. The two armies collide once more and are instantly pitted into a merciless struggle. Numerically both sides are now evenly matched – the outcome of the battle now hangs in the balance.

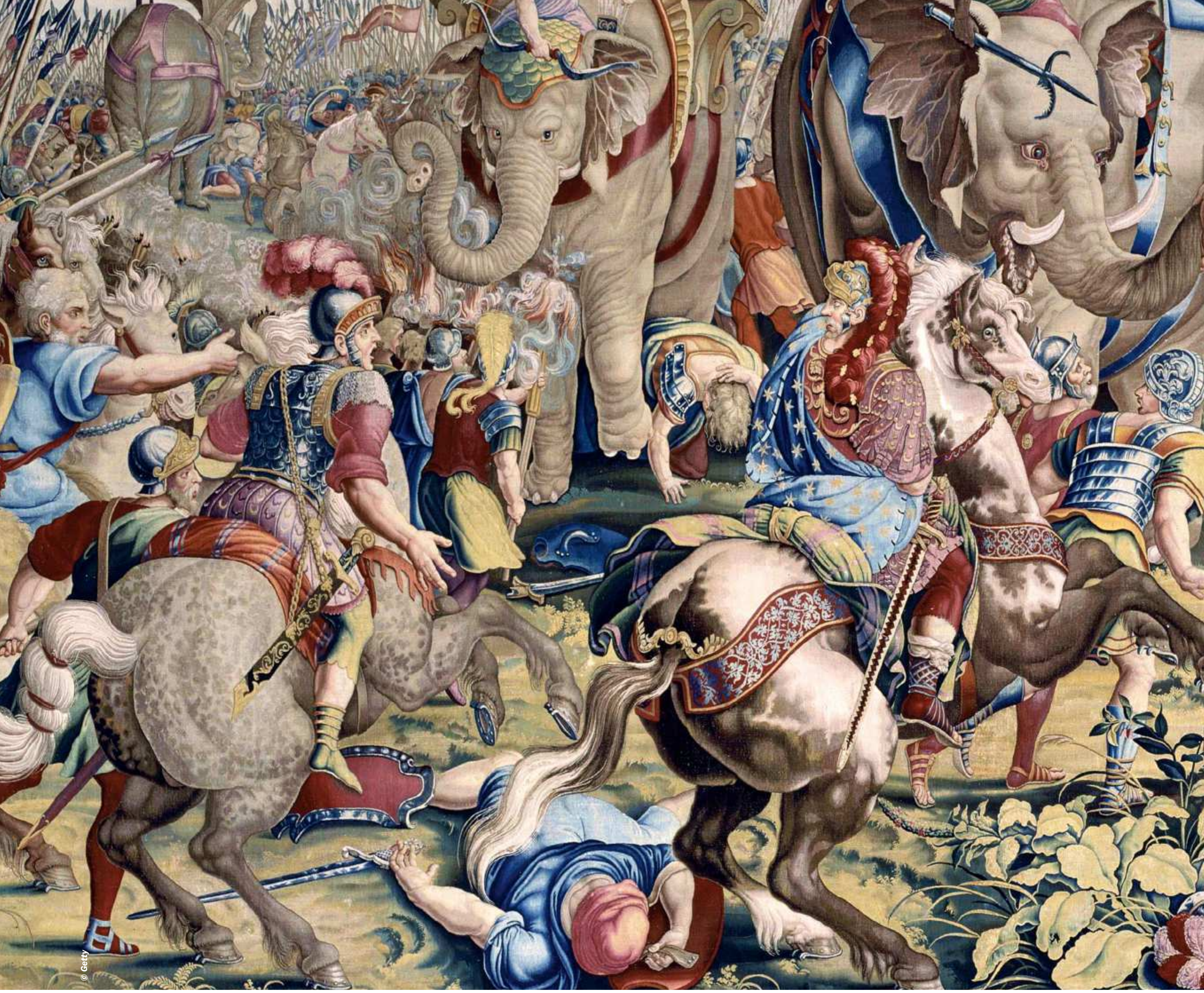
09 THE CAVALRY RETURNS

Just as it seems that Hannibal may once again secure a stunning victory against a Roman army, Scipio's cavalry return from their pursuit of their Carthaginian opponents, slamming into the rear of Hannibal's veterans. To their immense credit, Hannibal's seasoned campaigners do not fold, instead choosing to stand and fight to the bitter end despite now being hopelessly surrounded. Many are cut down where they stand, while those who survive are taken prisoner.

10 THE WAR IS OVER

Having routed Carthage's last standing army, Scipio ransacks Hannibal's camp before returning to Utica. After years of bloodshed the Second Punic War has finally been won.

Map: Nicholas Forder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at Trebia and Cannae, veterans of Rome's early struggles with Hannibal had endured military perjury since 216 BCE. Crucially for Scipio, these very men were both extremely experienced in the art of fighting Carthage and, even more importantly, desperate to rebuild their reputations by besting Hannibal in battle. Scipio's call for volunteers resulted in a crack force of 7,000 men, more than enough to scare the Senate into finally supporting his dream of invading North Africa.

With Sicily as his base, Scipio set sail across the Mediterranean in 204 BCE, making landfall on Carthage's north coast near the city of Utica. Prudently, he sought an alliance with Massinissa, a prince of Numidia, a land known for its excellent cavalry. By 203 BCE the allies were besieging the city, and despite Carthage's efforts to lift the siege with an army comprising their own soldiers and those loyal to Syphax, another Numidian noble, Scipio soon took it.

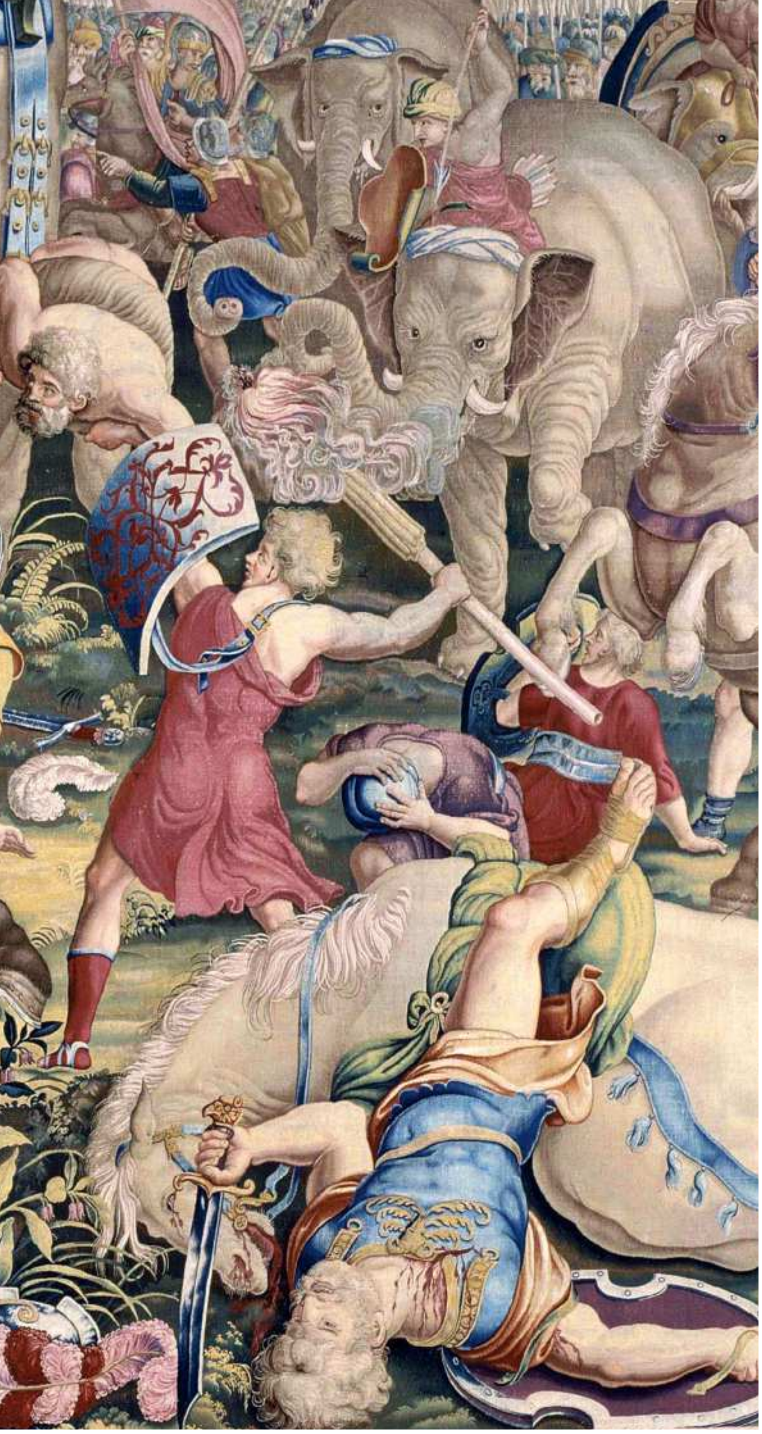
Carthage's prospects now looked dire, and the situation was to worsen significantly that same year when Scipio and Massinissa once again combined to destroy a Carthaginian host, this time at the Battle of the Great Plains. 30,000 men had either been slain or captured, and their general, Hasdrubal Gisco, would later choose suicide over being torn apart by an enraged gang of Carthaginians.

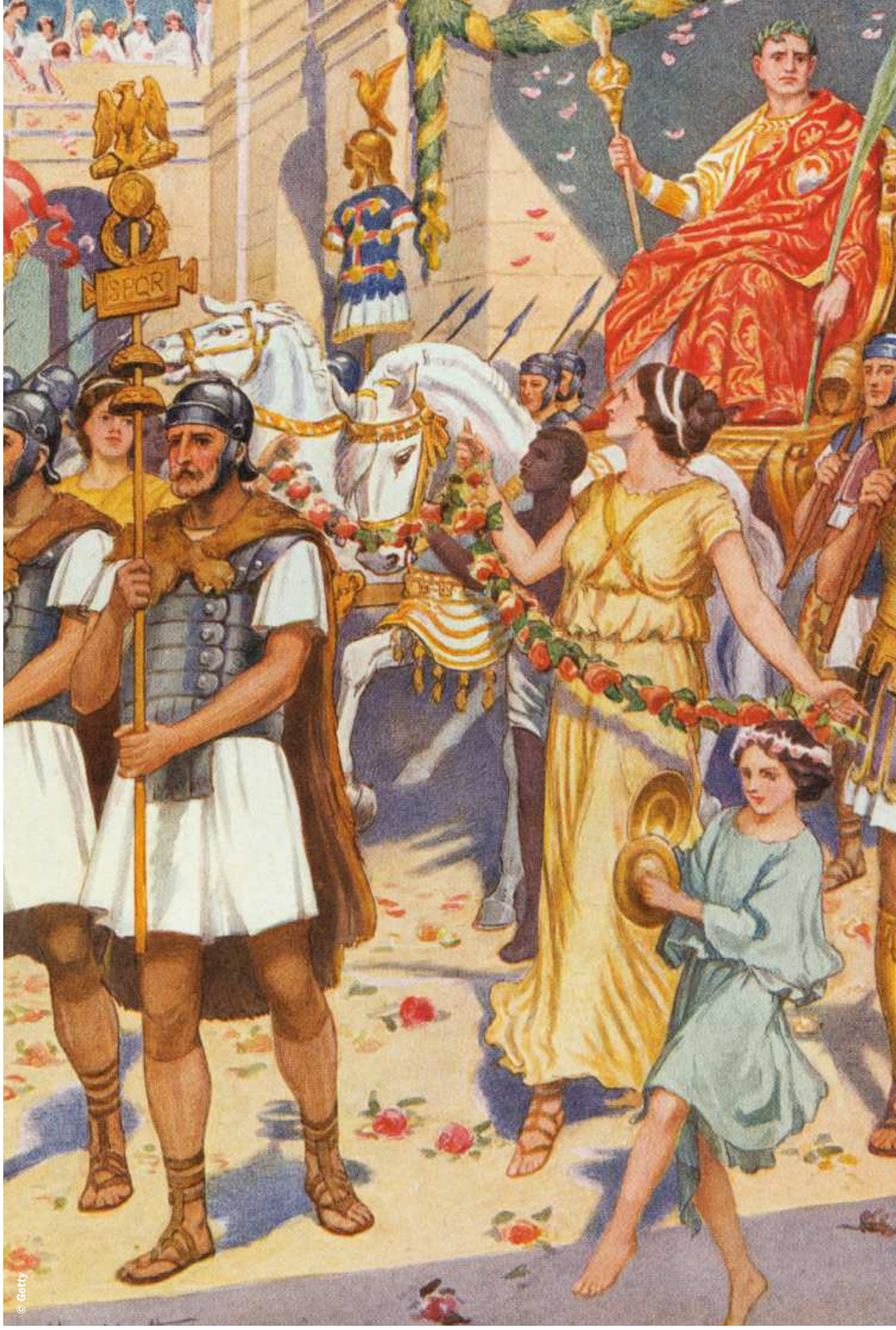
Where once it was Rome beset by panic as a foreign invader approached, now it was Carthage's turn to collapse into an episode of hysteria. Their dreams of forcing a weakened Rome to the negotiating table had been turned on their heads; now it was they who were scrambling to agree a peace deal. Fortunately for them, Scipio was a man of fair judgement.

Standing by his principles, Scipio informed Carthage that their overseas territories were to be confiscated, its fleet was to be drastically reduced and it was to pay war reparations. By any standard these terms were incredibly lenient given the destruction that Hannibal had wrought on the Italian Peninsula for over a decade and a half. Carthage would have been wise to stick to them.

Despite having escaped a string of military defeats relatively unscathed, Carthage, or more specifically, its senate, failed to appreciate its fortune and instead seized the first opportunity to hit back at their vanquishers by seizing a stricken Roman fleet off their coast and stripping them of their supplies in 202 BCE. Deeming the peace treaty offered by Rome as an inconvenience, the senate, which was comprised of influential citizens overseen by two 'suffetes' (judges), recalled a disgruntled Hannibal from Italy and prepared to make a final stand despite Hannibal's warnings that his army wasn't ready to fight. They could not have dreamed up a better casus belli for Rome,

"THE PROSPECT OF HANNIBAL MARCHING ON ROME WAS A GROWING POSSIBILITY IN FRENZIED ROMAN MINDS"

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which simply wouldn't tolerate this galling display of arrogance.

Having remained in North Africa, Scipio once again marched to confront Carthage. His army of approximately 35,000 met Hannibal's force of around 40,000 men on 19 October near what is today the border between Tunisia and Algeria. However, instead of immediately coming to blows, Hannibal first extended the hand of friendship in a bid to avoid a battle.

Reminding Scipio of the terms that he himself offered Carthage only the year before, Hannibal implored his opposite number to consider peace. Scipio is believed to have listened politely before curtly informing Hannibal that it was Carthage who "seemed to find peace intolerable" and suggesting that he ready himself for battle. Hannibal rode back to his army to do just that.

As Hannibal's three lines arranged themselves behind a buttress of armoured elephants, the Carthaginians among them must have considered the significance of what was about to take place. While victory over Scipio's men would place fame and booty in their hands, defeat would almost certainly mean their deaths, the razing of their city and the enslavement of their people. The sound of half of Hannibal's elephants suddenly breaking into a charge may well have come as some relief from these horrifying thoughts.

At the other end of the field, Scipio's army could only watch as Hannibal's trumpeting titans raced towards them. Thankfully for them, the elephants quickly became disorientated and began to turn back on themselves, stomping into the cavalry unit that Hannibal had stationed on his left flank. Likely due to their own initiative, as opposed to a direct command, the Numidian riders on Scipio's right flank recognised the opportunity unfolding before them and hurtled forwards.

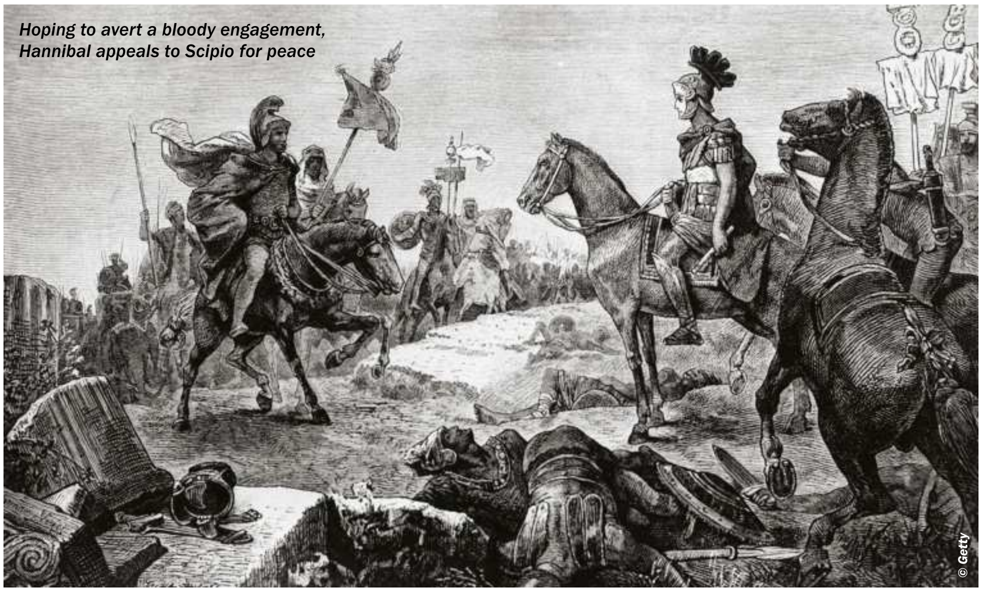
Events were moving beyond the control of either general, and it wasn't long before the second division of war elephants was pouring forwards. This time the beasts reached enemy lines only to stride into Scipio's well-laid trap, the gaps in his ranks funnelling the elephants towards the Roman skirmishers at the rear. Many of the poor animals were cut down, and those who did manage to flee did so in terror.

__Above, left:__ This colourful tapestry by 16th-century artist Giulio Romano depicts Scipio leading his men

__Above:__ Scipio is hailed a hero upon his return to Rome

Now came the turn of Scipio's Roman riders. Starting out from the left flank, these lightly armoured horsemen advanced towards the Carthaginian cavalry opposite them. A vicious engagement erupted as each side slashed at each other while trying to steady their steeds. Scipio's men soon gained the advantage and chased their foes from the field, a development that now meant only infantry remained. Both sets duly advanced.

No quarter was given in the carnage that followed the two sides colliding, although both commanders kept their last line of troops in reserve for as long as possible. In fact, some historians have pondered why Hannibal was so uncharacteristically conservative in his approach. It could be argued that the general



Hoping to avert a bloody engagement, Hannibal appeals to Scipio for peace

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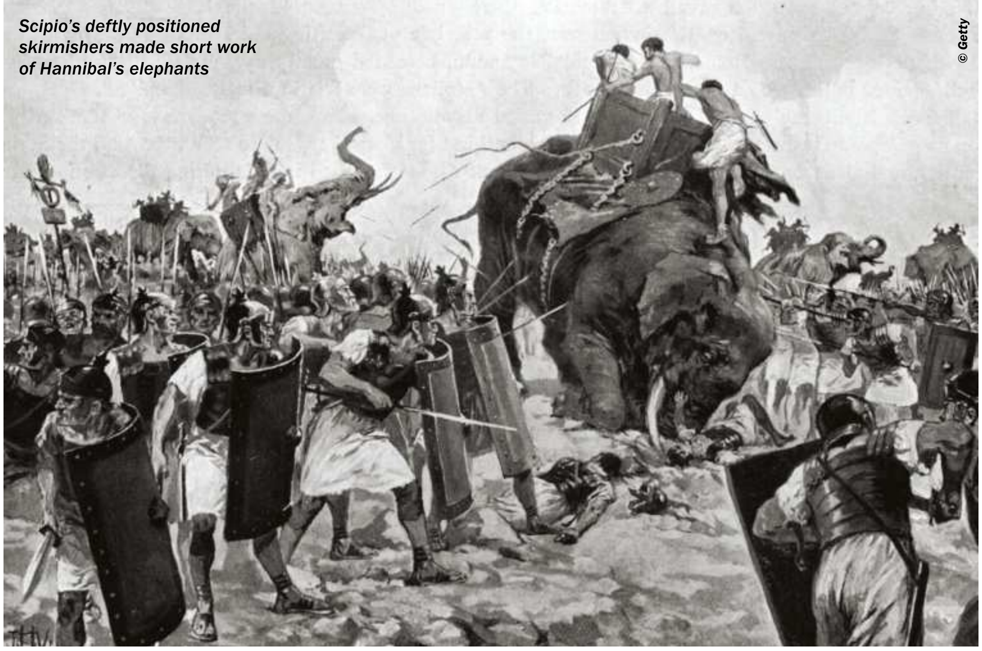

Scipio's deftly positioned skirmishers made short work of Hannibal's elephants

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Another anachronistic depiction of the battle by 16th-century Dutch artist Cornelis Cort, adapted from Giulio Romano's tapestry, shows the mayhem Carthage's elephants caused on the battlefield

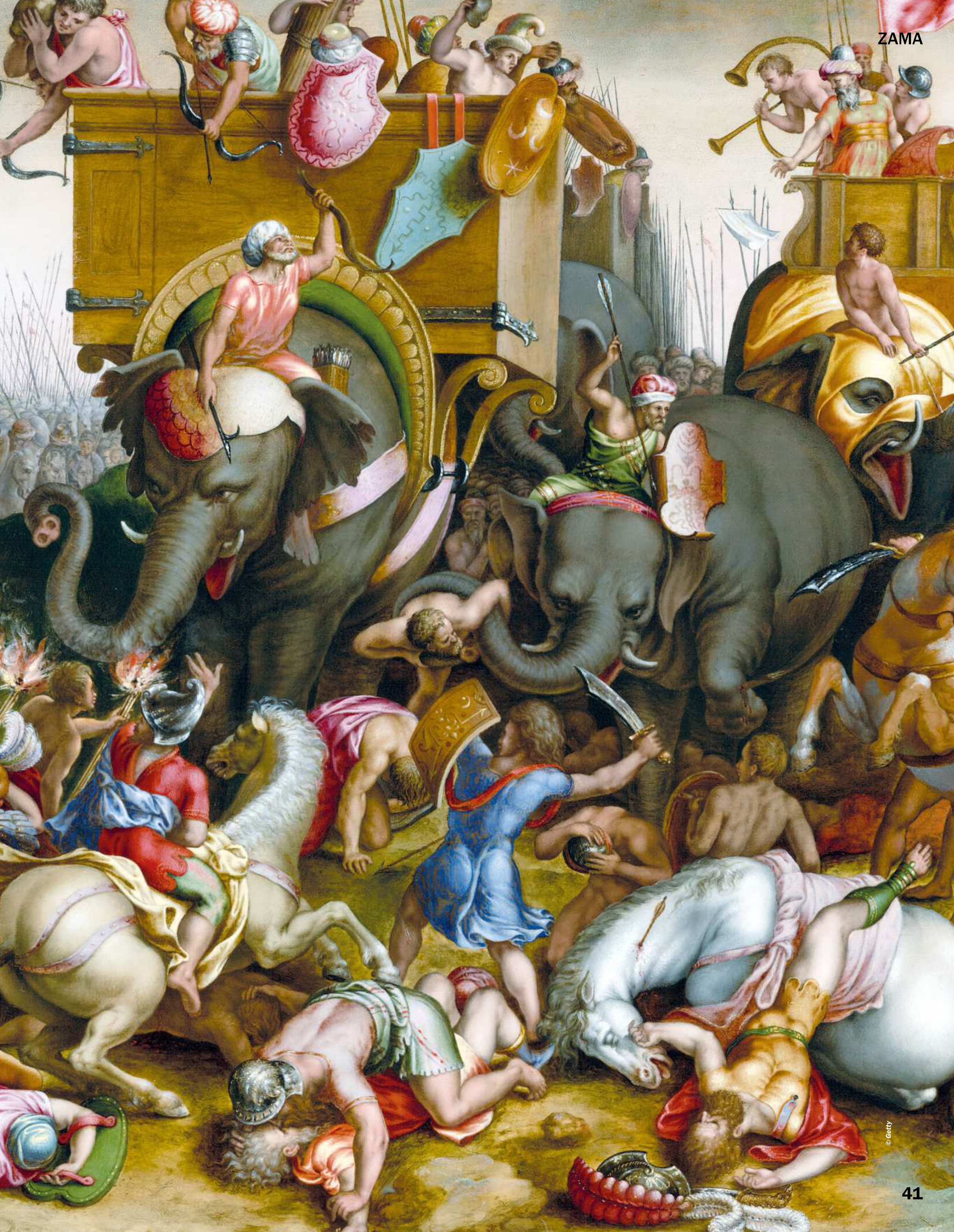
was merely biding his time, waiting for the best moment to commit his formidable veterans.

Ultimately, it made no difference that Hannibal's army had managed to fight Scipio's to a standstill, for they could never have foreseen the menace approaching their rear. Whether they finished routing Hannibal's cavalry first is not clear, but what is beyond doubt is that Scipio's horsemen returned to the battle precisely when it was poised to go either way. Valiantly struggling to hold the Roman infantry back, Hannibal's footsoldiers were completely exposed as the enemy cavalry slammed into them. The Carthaginians were surrounded and systematically cut down or captured. Hannibal had suffered his first major defeat.

Scipio's victory at Zama finally ended the Second Punic War, a struggle that had begun in 218 BCE, and this time his terms would not be so kind to Carthage. When he demanded Carthage surrender its elephants, the entirety of its fleet, and pay Rome the truly enormous sum of 10,000 talents (245 tons) of silver, they were in no position to resist. Yet while these terms were humbling, the ultimate insult for the once-mighty empire of Carthage was Rome's instruction that Hannibal's homeland was henceforth forbidden from waging war without first being granted permission by the Senate in Rome. A once feared giant was now nothing more than a cowed client state. Scipio returned triumphant to Rome.

For Carthage, the true cost of defeat at Zama would not be paid in full until the spring of 146 BCE, when a ruthless Roman army laid siege to the city, slaughtering up to 350,000 people, enslaving a further 50,000 and then destroying every building brick by brick. By that stage their often under-appreciated saviour was long dead, Hannibal having chosen poison over falling into Rome's hands.

"THE CARTHAGINIANS WERE SURROUNDED AND SYSTEMATICALLY CUT DOWN OR CAPTURED"



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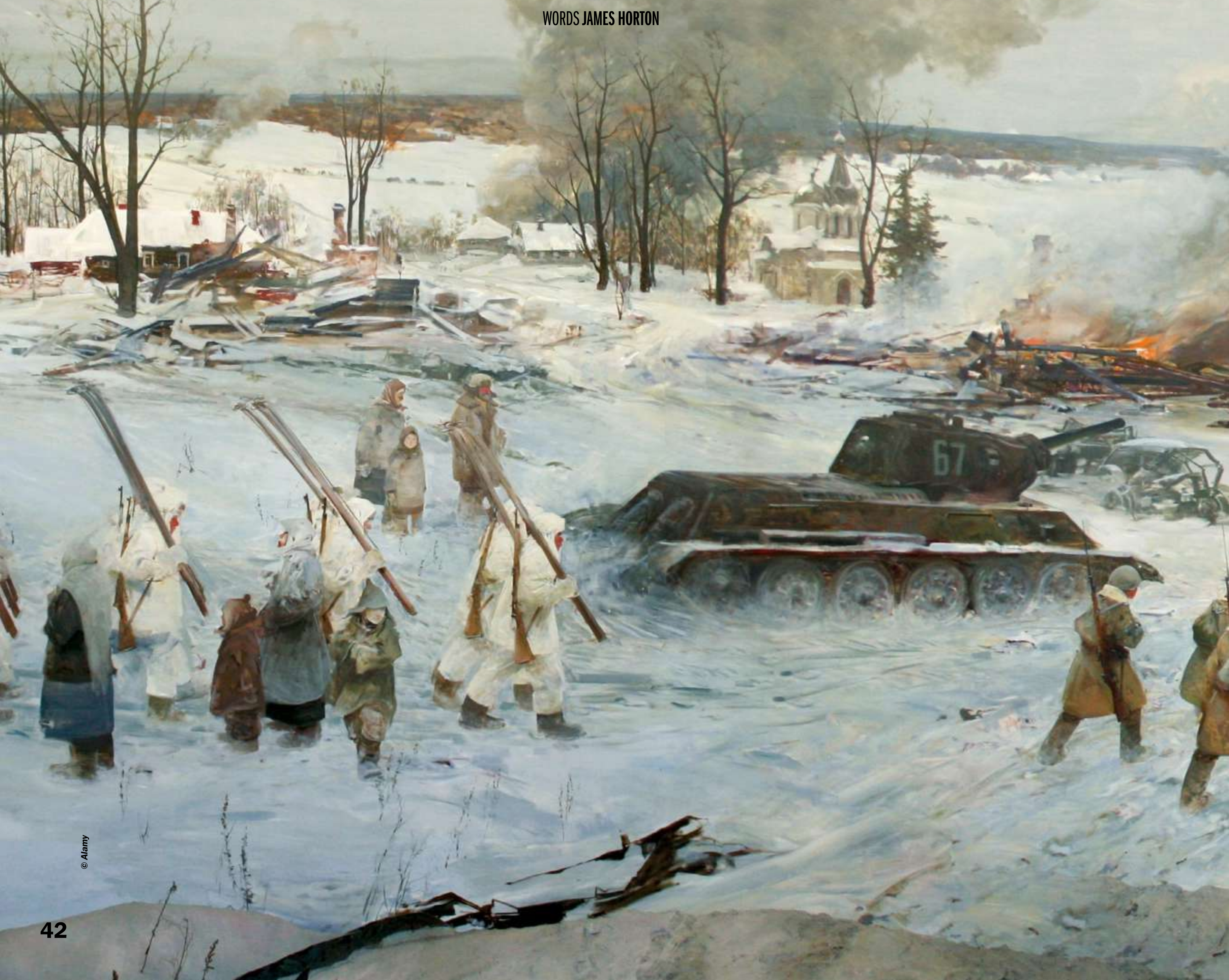
AT THE GATES OF MOSCOW

In 1941 the Nazi war machine faced two deadly foes: the Red Army and the winter

WORDS **JAMES HORTON**



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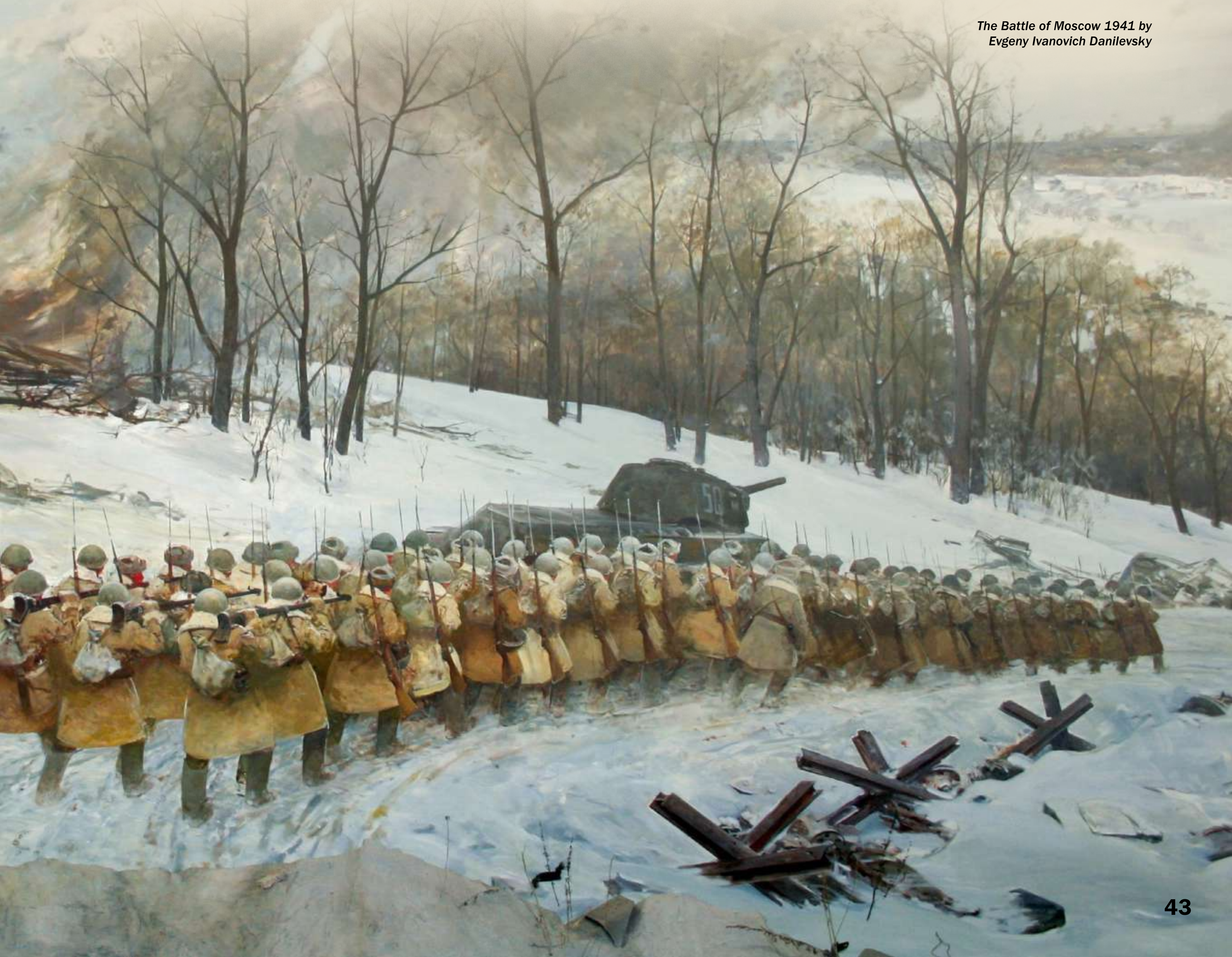
We will, without fail, hold Moscow." Marshal Georgy Zhukov was resolute in the autumn of 1941 when asked by the leader of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin, if they could realistically defend the Soviet capital. Zhukov's confidence may have come as a comfort to Stalin, but the Soviet situation looked dire. Since June of that year the Soviet Union had lost vast swathes of territory, suffering crushing defeat after crushing defeat, following a surprise invasion by Nazi Germany. By the beginning of October the Germans' eastern army, the Ostheer, had once again set its sights on Moscow and devised a plan of conquest under the moniker Operation Typhoon. Army Group Centre – the division of the Ostheer tasked with driving straight at the heart of Soviet Russia – had secured its flanks and was on the march.

Operation Typhoon began with yet more savage victories for the Germans. The month opened with protracted battles near Vyazma and the Bryansk Oblast, which stood between the Germans and their ultimate target. The commander of Army Group Centre, Fedor von Bock, achieved success in part thanks to the arrival of the 2nd Panzer Army, which outflanked the Soviets. The Red Army soldiers were enveloped, but continued to fight bitterly until mid-October, doing their part for the war effort by slowing the German advance to their capital. The commander of the 2nd Panzer Army, Heinz Guderian, had played instrumental roles in the invasions of Poland and France and had recently helped the Ostheer capture Kiev. He had returned to Army Group Centre at less than full strength but buoyed by the prospect of an impending German victory. The capture of Moscow was to be conducted by means of a pincer attack, with Guderian's forces attacking from the south via Tula, Panzer commanders Georg-Hans Reinhardt and Erich Hoepner leading forces from the north, and the rest of Bock's forces progressing from the centre. At the beginning of the advance on Moscow the central battle line stretched for over 700km and consisted of nearly two million German soldiers.

"GERMAN HIGH COMMAND KNEW THAT THEIR OBJECTIVES MUST BE ATTAINED BY WINTER IF THEY WERE TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF SUCCESS"

Bock's forces followed up on their success by dislodging Soviet resistance stationed at key points en route to Moscow that composed the Mozhaisk Defensive Line, which included Volokolamsk, Mozhaisk, Maloyaroslavets and Kaluga. Yet despite these victories the advance would soon be slowed – then stalled – by an underestimated obstacle: the Russian weather. Nazi command was acutely aware of the harsh Russian winter that scuppered Napoleon's campaign in 1812, and as such their invasion was characteristically aimed at achieving a quick resolution. Despite this, Hitler had ordered that Army Group Centre pause their advance during the previous month, as Army Groups North and South had not made as much ground. The result was that the German front line, which stretched for well over 1,500km, bulged at its centre in an easterly direction, leaving the centre exposed at its flanks. German high command knew that their objectives must be attained by winter if they were to have any chance of success, yet Hitler peeled forces away from Bock to fight

The Battle of Moscow 1941 by Evgeny Ivanovich Danilevsky



STAND YOUR GROUND

How Stalin's NKVD blocking detachments prevented retreat by any means necessary

Although the outcome for Moscow was not quite as precarious as the closeness of the German army suggested it to be, the battle between the Germans and Soviets in 1941 was a brutal affair. Ideologically the two sides were staunchly opposed, with the German soldiers killing thousands of 'Bolshevists' and 'partisans' – of which many were unarmed citizens – in cold blood.

Most Soviet soldiers were fiercely motivated to avenge their fallen comrades and protect their motherland, and the Red Army was a formidable force. But despite this some soldiers, especially those with little or no combat experience, sought to flee. Stalin would simply not allow this and turned to his trusted NKVD officers to ensure the threat of death lay behind his men as well as in front of them.

The NKVD, or 'People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs', had been established in 1934. It originally operated as a spying service, but throughout Stalin's reign it had grown in influence to become the Soviet leader's brutal enforcement arm. By 1941 the NKVD had established rifle regiments to ensure Stalin's will was felt on the front lines. Mainly equipped with pistols and rifles, the NKVD 'blocking detachments' weren't intended as frontline combatants. Instead they operated as a second line with the mandate to ensure that no soldier – including officers – retreated without permission.

In the event of such a retreat, the blocking detachments would attempt to stop the men with warnings – sometimes delivered as shots fired above their heads. If this didn't work then the soldiers were often arrested and detained, but in extreme cases fleeing men were simply shot dead by the NKVD troops.

Victims of the Soviet NKVD in Lvov, June 1941

Images © Alamy

Stalin ordered that Moscow be defended no matter what the cost in Russian lives elsewhere. By the time the German line had realigned it was nearly October, meaning that from its inception Operation Typhoon was a race against time.

Although the Germans were aware of the impending bitter cold, they didn't consider the challenges the Russian autumn would throw at them. During spring and autumn, periods of heavy rainfall and melted snow known as 'rasputitsta' drowned and bogged down country roads, rendering them inaccessible to German vehicles. The toll was even worse on the infantry, who had to wade through the quagmire in filthy uniforms that weren't being replaced. All the while during this advance the Germans endured repeated bombardments and infantry assaults from pockets of Soviet soldiers. Some divisions had been depleted so badly from these efforts they had a mere 25 per cent of their effective fighting force remaining. This was the beginning of a severe strain on the men, which was only set to get worse over the coming months.

By the end of October, traversing the terrain was becoming so difficult that the decision was made to pause the advance until the first winter frosts hardened the roads. The Soviets made the most of this period of idleness from the Germans. Zhukov ordered around 250,000 citizens of Moscow to carve a defensive ring around the city with a radius of about 16km, and this was reinforced by extra defensive rings within the city walls. The trenches and barricades were laden with rows of barbed wire and reinforced concrete. Additionally, houses that overlooked the barricades were converted into makeshift defensive positions by bricking up windows but leaving firing slits for troops to strike the enemy.

The manpower available to the Soviets at this stage, however, remained precarious. The USSR had a previously robust tolerance for absorbing losses, but their numbers in the immediate vicinity of Moscow were currently depleted owing to the many sizable defeats the Red Army had suffered on their western front. At this time they remained heavily outnumbered by the invaders, and the citizens of Moscow were growing increasingly nervous. In a display of political astuteness, Stalin ordered that the October Revolution Parade go ahead in Red Square on 7 November as it had done for the last 24 years. Although this required many men to be held back from the front lines and trained in marching orders rather than battle tactics for several days, the parade galvanised and raised the spirits of Moscow's population. Stalin, who had sent other members of his ruling party away from the city but had decided to remain himself, added to the renewed fervour by delivering a powerful speech as the men prepared to march to the front.

Many soldiers were then sent needlessly to their deaths against the Germans, forgoing all the defensive advantages the Russians had enjoyed, such as their entrenched positions. These counter-attacks were insisted on by Stalin, despite Zhukov warning him of how many lives would be wasted. Perhaps the most extreme example of this recklessness came from waves of Mongolian cavalry who had been drafted in from the east. With their sabres drawn high, the men on horseback charged across an open field towards prepared German gunfire. The soldiers and their steeds were peppered with bullets, and in some cases exploded as the enemy shells ruptured through their lines. And yet when the smoke cleared the German soldiers were amazed to see another wave of cavalrymen charging in their direction,

© Alamy

Thousands of civilians were put to work building defensive positions in Moscow to thwart the Germans

© Alamy

The October Revolution parade went ahead in 1941 to boost Russian morale

DISPLACED

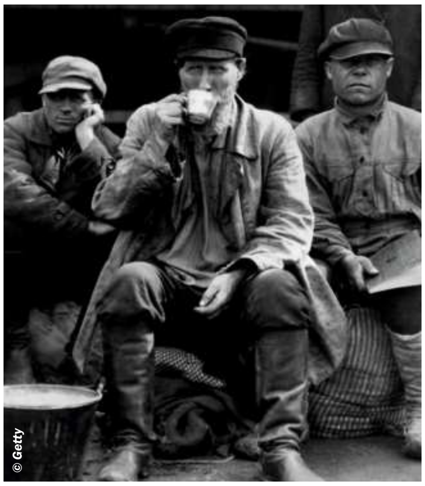
The unspoken tragedy of the Soviet peasants crushed between two opposing armies

By 21 November 1941, more German soldiers were in field hospitals because of illness than wounds suffered in battle. This was down to the brutal Russian weather, which was steadfastly below freezing and colder still with wind chill. But instead of providing its troops with adequate winter clothing and shelter, the German army remained on the march. Its soldiers edged closer to Moscow in their standard apparel while their appendages succumbed to frostbite and infections took hold in their lungs. The only shelter from the cold the advancing soldiers could find was in the villages and towns on the route to the capital city. These settlements became priority targets for the German forces to capture – and for the Red Army to destroy.

As the Ostheer had realised, adequate warm clothing for the troops would not be forthcoming and as winter set in the soldiers wasted little time in stealing winter apparel from captured Russian citizens. Men were beaten as the troops tore their boots from their feet, and as the cold deepened so did the German soldiers' cruelty. After a Russian village was captured the civilians were thrown out of their homes by Nazi troops desperate for warmth, shelter and food.

The plight of Russian peasants freezing and starving to death was met largely with indifference by Stalin. And when the Soviet leader received word that the German invaders were in an increasingly vulnerable state due to the harsh weather, he sought to deny them shelter by any means necessary. He ordered that all settlements near the main roads and enemy lines be destroyed, and had many bombed into oblivion whether or not citizens remained inside.

Russian peasants around Moscow suffered greatly at the hands of both armies



© Getty

Troops specialising in cold-weather fighting were drafted in to the campaign

directly towards the obliterated corpses of their comrades. Neither the second or third wave got any closer than the first.

This is not to say that the Soviet counter-attacks enjoyed no successes at all, however. At some pressure points across the vast German line the Russians inflicted thousands of casualties, and both their successes and failures left the Germans with the grim realisation that perhaps their enemy was far from defeated and would continue to fight for every inch of their homeland.

Operation Typhoon resumed in the frost of mid-November. The ground was once again solid beneath their feet, but the drop in temperature to well below freezing and their increasingly stretched supply lines meant the Germans were hindered rather than helped by the onset of winter. The oil and lubricants in their tanks, vehicles and artillery began to freeze, and it became ever more difficult to keep the motor divisions running. The frost also rendered optical aiming instruments less accurate, and the narrow German tank treads struggled to gain traction on the icy roads.

Added to the frustrations of their machinery failing, the German soldiers themselves were suffering. The Ostheer was advancing further from its supply lines of rail networks, a problem that was compounded in the frost because many of the transport trucks moving goods to the front began to fail. This meant that the men went hungry and received essentially no winter apparel. The clothing problem was made worse by Hitler's insistence that the Jewish factory labourers making winter garments for the military be put to death instead of allowing them to finish their work.

Despite these difficulties, the Germans continued their advance. Unlike many of the previous engagements the Ostheer had enjoyed – where the Panzer divisions exploited their mobility to outflank the enemy – throughout November the Germans had little choice but to charge headfirst into prepared Soviet gunfire. The war became one of attrition, and the Germans were losing men at an unsustainable rate. The 1942 Soviet propaganda movie, *Moscow Strikes Back*, summarised the German plight: "They advanced, but over a landscape carpeted by Nazi dead."

> **"THROUGHOUT NOVEMBER THE GERMANS HAD LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO CHARGE HEADFIRST INTO PREPARED SOVIET GUNFIRE"**

The Soviets were conceding ground, but doing so slowly, fighting doggedly at each bottleneck. Siberian divisions, who specialised in cold-climate fighting, were drafted in from the Soviet's eastern front and waged total war against the German invaders. The defence of the village of Gorodishche saw 812 Siberian soldiers killed fighting to the last man. In situations where they enjoyed the reverse they repaid the debt in full, killing all captured Germans – as was becoming standard practice. Both sides were becoming desperate, lacked the capacity to take prisoners and were ideologically opposed in the extreme. As such, prisoners were rarely taken and each man resolved to fight to their last breath.

At the northern pincer arm, Reinhardt and Hoepner's men fought headlong through woodland into fortified enemy positions. Snipers lay nestled in disguised elevated locations, heavy guns were entrenched in makeshift bunkers and seemingly indestructible

Marshal Georgy Zhukov was drafted in by Stalin to mastermind the defence of Moscow

heavy tanks had their cannons poised at the ready to greet the advancing columns. The roads were also obstructed with collapsed trees and laced with mines – sometimes thousands of them per square mile. The new Soviet tanks, namely the medium T-34 and heavy KV-1, were especially dangerous. Panzer divisions landed direct hits on them to no effect, while their cannons tore through the German armour. A single KV-1 managed to keep a battalion pinned for an entire day, only succumbing once its crew ran out of ammo.

The southern flanking arm of the German advance was fairing even worse. By mid-November the southern roads may have frosted over, but even 125km from the outskirts of Moscow the roads bore few marks of German tank treads. Guderian's forces had suffered greatly from combat losses and cold-related illnesses and were by this time operating at a meagre fraction of their former strength. His spearhead consisted of a division with just 15 tanks remaining, and elsewhere it wasn't much better. The battle group Guderian had used to capture the city of Tula en route to Moscow, for example, had been vastly depleted from 600 to 50 tanks. In a ludicrous indictment of insufficient logistical planning, Guderian's remnants still weren't supplied with enough fuel to make it to Moscow.

His forces had so few tanks that his men took the town of Yefremov without all the signatures of the German army: tanks, air support and many heavy guns. Yet despite this accomplishment reports were soon filtering through that Siberian regiments were being prepared for a counter-attack to recapture the town. It took three days for Guderian to realise the game was up. On 20 November he had to admit to high command that his objective was simply unattainable, coming to a halt well short of the Moscow border.

The Germans to the north persisted in their advance, moving from town to town, grinding through stiff resistance with great difficulty against pockets of a few hundred Russian soldiers at a time. By 26 November Hoepner's men had captured the town of Istra, 35km from the border of Moscow. Advance parties pressed on and reached a village 15km from the city, so close that they could glimpse it during clear skies and hit its outer suburbs with their artillery.

Yet this would be the closest the Germans got to threatening Moscow. A tiny fraction of a battered and beleaguered force had nearly arrived at the gates, but even with considerably more soldiers and supplies they would be hard-pressed to break through the multiple battle lines Zhukov had erected in the city – and the soldiers and 48,000-strong civilian militia that stood behind them. Thanks to the winter climate and the soldiers and civilians of the Soviet Union, the Germans were nowhere close to that position.

The ramifications of losing the Battle of Moscow were gargantuan. The Panzer divisions had been decimated, while the fighting had bruised the Soviet military but by no means crippled it – the Red Army had faced down the full might of the German military. With Moscow still in their hands the Soviets retained a beacon of hope, as well as the nexus of their logistical and trade networks.

Because Stalin had shifted much of Soviet production further east, the USSR would have remained a formidable adversary even without Moscow, but the loss of their capital would have been a damaging blow. Contemporaries were right to suspect that if the Germans could not capture Moscow, the Soviets would soon be coming for Berlin. Although this would not be the last offensive for Soviet territory in the war, the German war machine had missed its golden opportunity to seriously debilitate the Soviet Union.

By 5 December the German offensive had well and truly ground to a halt, with Bock reporting to command that capturing Moscow was now impossible. The moment of peak German vulnerability had arrived, and Zhukov decided to strike while Soviet iron was hot and the German troops were freezing. Contrary to German estimations, the Soviets were far from down to their last few soldiers. Throughout October Zhukov had raised four new armies, and he added eight more in November. Fifty-eight divisions of these had been held back from the front and remained unknown to the Nazi regime. Yet even without these reserves the Red Army now outnumbered the German Ostheer forces four million to three million. This was remarkable considering the calamitous Soviet defeats, and these vast reserves of manpower came as a nasty surprise to the Germans.

The counter began in earnest on 7 December, surprising and overwhelming German divisions across the front line. Bock's men narrowly escaped encirclement in several instances by withdrawing, despite Hitler repeatedly instructing them to stand their ground. Such was the effectiveness of Zhukov's counter that Army Group Centre was nearly destroyed in the reversal. But as the skies cleared, salvation for the Germans came in the form of the Luftwaffe, which dominated the skies and savaged the Soviet offensive. By 7 January the German lines had been pushed back around 100km, but the supply and fatigue problems that had so hampered their advance now plagued the Soviets, who could persist no further. A few hundred kilometres from Moscow, new battle lines were drawn and the two sides settled in for another brutal round of fighting. The Battle of Moscow had been lost, but the war was far from over.

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Great Wisdom Sutra from the Chusonji Temple Sutra Collection

THE CONQUEST OF NORTHERN HONSHU

Northern Honshu was not always part of Japan; its colonisation and conquest, and the dynamic response by the Emishi even after their defeat, had a far-reaching influence on Japanese political and military history

WORDS **DR NYRI A BAKKALIAN**

Before its annexation by the Yamato court, northern Honshu was called Michinoku, meaning 'beyond where the road ends'. In the 7th century, the court's meaningful sphere of control extended as far as Shirakawa Barrier (Shirakawa no seki), a government outpost in modern-day Fukushima prefecture.

Shirakawa Barrier was so far from central Japan that even in later poetry, 'Shirakawa Barrier' survived as a euphemism evoking distance. Beyond Shirakawa Barrier in the mountains to the north and east lived the people whom the Yamato state collectively called Emishi – barbarians. They were a people who stubbornly refused to submit to the Yamato aegis.

There's some debate as to whether or not the Emishi had a state or states like the Yamato court, but from the Yamato perspective, theirs was foreign land regardless. The colonisation and conquest of northern Honshu, and the dynamic response to that conquest by the Emishi even after their military defeat, had a profound impact on Japanese political and military history.

In the face of this military threat at and beyond its northern borders, the Yamato state steadily expanded its regional control through force. Colonisation, combat and a line of fortress-settlements pushed them north over the years. Yamato soldiers were posted to the region as colonists and to deter Emishi uprising. As Suzuki Takuya notes in the book *Emishi to Tohoku Senso*, from 701 through the late 9th century, the number of Yamato troops rose from 6,000 to 10,000 in the year 768, before settling at around 8,000. Together with this buildup, in the 8th century the Yamato state also established gold mines in Mutsu: the colonisation of Emishi land was a lucrative business.

By the late 8th century, the Yamato court's northern holdings were governed from Fort Taga (Tagajo), a government outpost and military installation just east of modern-day Sendai. Like other provincial capitals in the empire, Fort Taga was the seat of a civil administration. But because this was the edge of empire, it was also the headquarters for a special peacekeeping officer, the Commanding General for Pacification. Together with this, the court divided this newly annexed land into two provinces, Mutsu and Dewa, which endured in some form until the launch of the modern prefecture system in the 1870s.

But Emishi resistance to this foreign authority continued despite the presence of troops. Emishi murdered a Yamato official in 720, and launched a rebellion. The court soon dispatched a punitive expedition in response, and issued an edict ordering land cultivation, which would further bring the land in line with Yamato norms, making it easier to control.

After further revolts in Mutsu in 774 and Dewa in 777, Emishi rebels burned Fort Taga in 780 and killed local government officials in a revolt led by one-time Yamato ally Korehari no Azamaro. Azamaro had previously led Yamato-allied Emishi troops in support of action against unsubjugated Emishi in Mutsu. Michishima Otate, a local Yamato-born resident, apparently taunted Azamaro for his foreign ancestry, which reportedly provoked the revolt. Azamaro's men quickly murdered both Michishima and Ki no Hirozumi, a court noble also antagonistic to Azamaro who was posted to the region. This rebellion raged for over half a year.

Things only worsened for the Yamato court, culminating in the particularly large late-8th-century Emishi rebellion led by Aterui, who lived in Isawa, one of the Inner Six Counties in what's now Iwate prefecture, where he commanded a significant following. The revolt lasted for several years, until Aterui's defeat and execution in 802.

That year, a Yamato army under Sakanoue no Tamuramaro crushed further concerted Emishi resistance. Tamuramaro is one of the first people in Japan to have received the title 'barbarian-subduing generalissimo' – sei-i taishogun – at a time when this title was given to the commanders of major expeditionary forces dispatched against foreign enemies. He secured Aterui's surrender and reasserted the court's authority in the Tohoku region.

Tamuramaro's forces further expanded political and military control by building new fortifications. They also moved the regional government's seat from Fort Taga to Fort Isawa, in what is now southern Iwate. Locally based Yamato forces soon built other, more northerly forts. Yet this didn't end the uprisings: another in 878 saw Yamato outposts in Dewa destroyed. Again, it was some time before Yamato forces were able to respond and reassert their control.

As the Yamato government, newly ensconced in Heian-kyo (modern Kyoto), strengthened and solidified its control over the north, it divided the Emishi into two groups: fushu and Emishi. The fushu were the 'surrendered barbarians' or 'captives', Emishi who submitted to the court's authority and assimilated at least some of Yamato culture. But as historian Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan notes, the fushu kept up a continuity with their non-Yamato roots, holding onto their lands, gods, and even their weapons for the next several centuries. They were the court's regional allies, called upon to join military campaigns and contribute government levies and projects. Leaders of major fushu families could also hold the title of 'fushu chief' (fushucho), which recognised their preeminence but also brought them at least nominally into the Yamato government's political orbit.

Image: Wiki / PD / Art

Date Masamune's letter to Pope Paul V in 1613, where he refers to himself as "King of Oshu in the Empire of Japan"

Meanwhile, the court continued to label Emishi those northerners who did not submit, and who remained outside the court's control and the Yamato cultural sphere.

A fushu family that rose to prominence in the Heian era was the Northern Fujiwara, whose first stronghold was Tamuramaro's old Fort Isawa. This was a family of mixed Yamato-Emishi origin, which ruled from its second stronghold, Hiraizumi, for four generations.

Although it was kin to the princely Fujiwara family that frequently held political power at the Kyoto court, the Northern Fujiwara family made no secret of its Emishi heritage. Northern Fujiwara founder Fujiwara no Kiyohira (1056-1128) and his grandson Hidehira (1122-87) understood that their land lay 'inside' and 'outside' the empire, and took advantage of that position, maintaining connections with Kyoto while each called himself 'chief of the barbarians'.

The view from Kyoto held that the Northern Fujiwara were cultured, but also part barbarian. All Fujiwara lords starting with Kiyohira held some sort of court rank or office, but some in Kyoto felt that this was improper because of their Emishi heritage. Others feared the Northern Fujiwara were secretly commanders of a barbarian horde that could spill over into the rest of Japan without warning. This fear was part of what precipitated the northern military campaigns of Minamoto no Yoritomo, the first Kamakura shogun.

Regardless of their reputation in Kyoto as quasi-barbarians, the Fujiwara were wealthy thanks in part to the gold that the Yamato court had once discovered in the region, and were thus not only in a position to field fighting forces but also to be patrons of the arts and the centre of a Buddhist cultural sphere.

Theirs was a syncretic Buddhism, one that incorporated Heian-era Shinto deities as well as old Emishi deities that were still worshipped in northern Honshu. Kyoto developed its own Buddhist culture, but Hiraizumi's was different because it merged those Emishi spiritual traditions with Buddhism.

Chuson-ji and Motsu-ji, two of the Northern Fujiwara family's major temples, were named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2011. The temples were where haiku poet Matsuo Basho visited in the 17th century and wrote his famous poem about summer grass as the last remnant of warriors' dreams.

Protected by politics, soldiering and force of the dharma, the Northern Fujiwara state and society flourished until its sudden, violent destruction in 1189, before the still greater armed might of the armies Minamoto no Yoritomo raised from the Kanto region. But northern Honshu, now known as the Tohoku ('East-North') region, remained a politically semi-autonomous region into the late Edo period. While it is no longer the northernmost part of Japan, it does remain a significantly rural region today.

And what of the title of sei-i taishogun once held by Tamuramaro in his campaigns against the Emishi? This title went on to far greater fame as the honorific that would be held by three successive dynasties from the 12th to the 19th century. We remember it today in its abbreviated form: shogun.

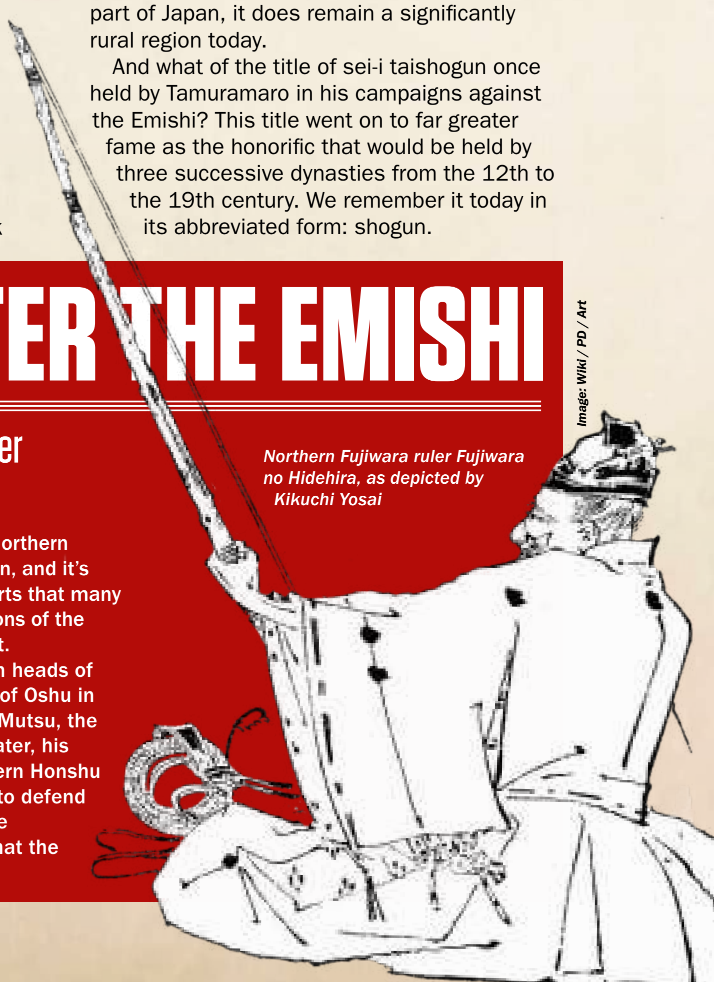
NORTHERN HONSHU AFTER THE EMISHI

The remote region continued to play an influential role in Japan's power struggles, arts and religion for many years

The story of northern Honshu as a semi-autonomous region not quite adhering to the rules of the rest of Japan continued well past Minamoto no Yoritomo's conquest of the Northern Fujiwara lands. Yoritomo stationed the Isawa family at Fort Taga, appointing it to the office of Mutsu Caretaker (Oshu Rusushoku), with considerable local autonomy.

The posting of local representatives with semi-autonomous authority continued under the succeeding Ashikaga shogunate (1336-1573), with the posting of tandai, or commissioners. Finally, in the Warring States era, the House of Date made itself into the region's political centre of gravity during the rule of its most renowned daimyo, Date Masamune (1567-1636). Masamune was like the Northern Fujiwara a patron of the arts and religion, and it's thanks to his and his descendants' efforts that many of the temples and other historic locations of the Northern Fujiwara survive to the present.

In his correspondence with European heads of state, Masamune called himself "King of Oshu in the Empire of Japan" – that is, King of Mutsu, the former Michinoku. And two centuries later, his descendants led the domains of northern Honshu in the Northern Alliance, which fought to defend northern Honshu's autonomy during the Boshin War. One can't help but think that the Northern Fujiwara would be proud.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Northern Fujiwara ruler Fujiwara no Hidehira, as depicted by Kikuchi Yosai

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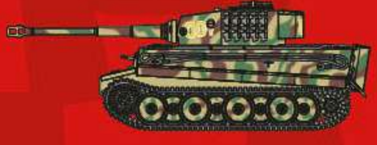
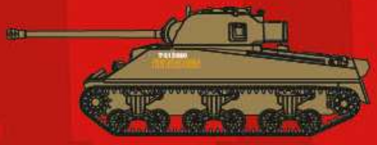
The mighty clash of armour which followed the successful Allied landings on the D-Day beaches of Normandy held the potential to determine the outcome of the war. This time, the dominance of the feared Tiger 1 would be challenged by rocket firing Typhoons from the air and a recently introduced Allied tank on the ground - although appearing outwardly similar to the standard Sherman at first glance, the 17-pounder anti-tank gun mounted on the 'Firefly' was more than capable of knocking out a Tiger. The Germans soon learned to look for the long barrelled Shermans first in any engagement and to make the Firefly a priority target, however, there were so many Shermans in Normandy that misidentification was highly likely and could prove fatal. The days of the mighty Tiger's dominance may have been numbered, but no Allied tank commander would relish the prospect of facing one in combat.

PZKPFW TIGER 1 AUSF E
Commanded by Michael Wittmann, schwere Panzer-Abteilung 101, Normandy, France, 1944.
Length 118mm Width 53mm Pieces 96



SHERMAN FIREFLY VC
Staffordshire Yeomanry, 27th Armoured Brigade, Operation Goodwood, Normandy, France, June 1944.
Length 110mm Width 37mm Pieces 88



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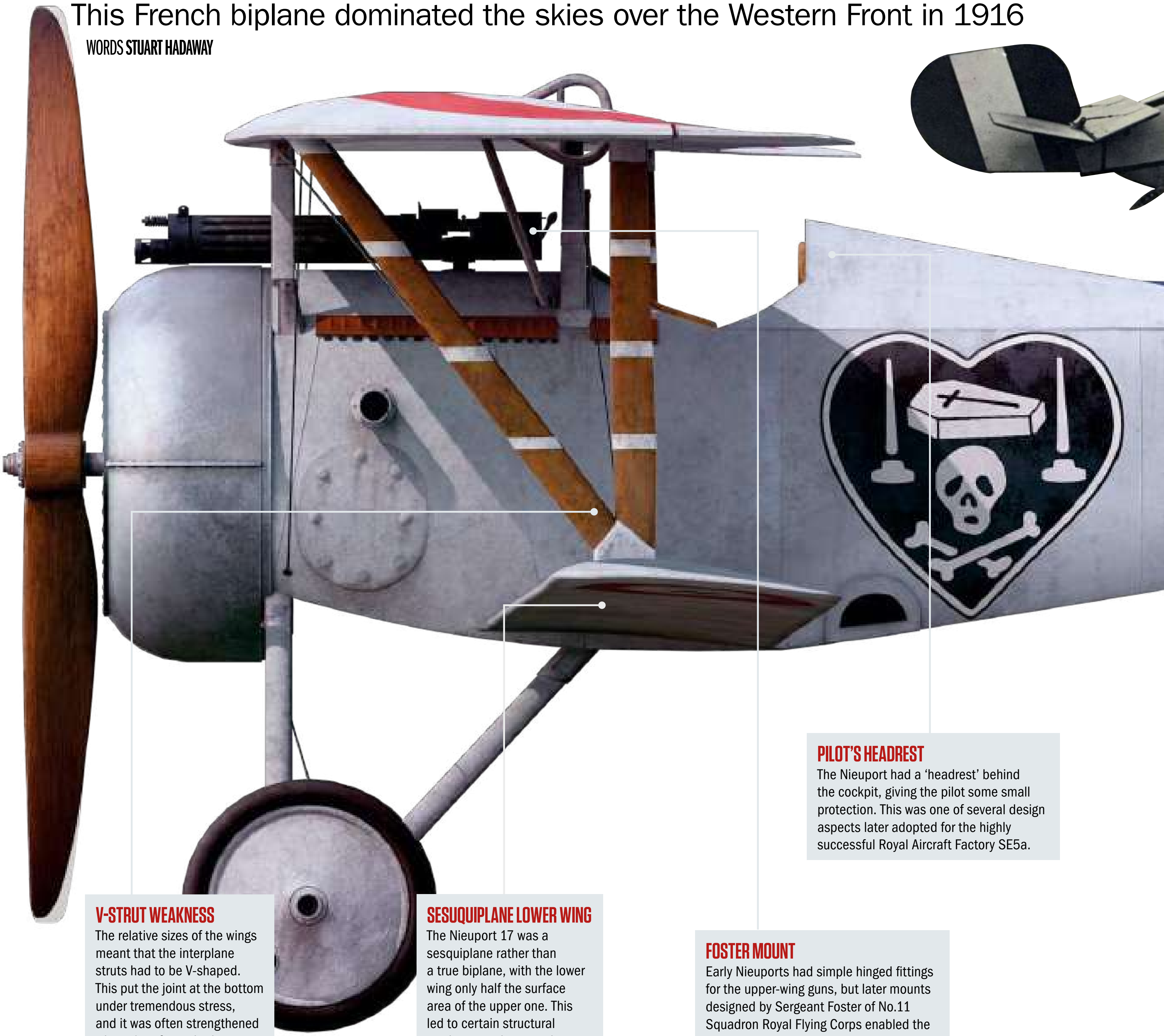
NIEUPORT 17

This French biplane dominated the skies over the Western Front in 1916

WORDS **STUART HADAWAY**



PILOT'S HEADREST

The Nieuport had a 'headrest' behind the cockpit, giving the pilot some small protection. This was one of several design aspects later adopted for the highly successful Royal Aircraft Factory SE5a.

V-STRUT WEAKNESS

The relative sizes of the wings meant that the interplane struts had to be V-shaped. This put the joint at the bottom under tremendous stress, and it was often strengthened when aircraft reached operational squadrons.

SESUQUIPLANE LOWER WING

The Nieuport 17 was a sesquiplane rather than a true biplane, with the lower wing only half the surface area of the upper one. This led to certain structural weaknesses, but gave better visibility and rate of climb.

FOSTER MOUNT

Early Nieuports had simple hinged fittings for the upper-wing guns, but later mounts designed by Sergeant Foster of No.11 Squadron Royal Flying Corps enabled the pilot to pull the gun backwards on a rail for reloading, or fire to upwards.

The Nieuport was light, fast and manoeuvrable

© Alamy

NIEUPORT 17

COMMISSIONED:	1916
ORIGIN:	FRANCE
LENGTH:	5.8M (19FT)
WINGSPAN:	8.16M (26FT 9IN)
ENGINE:	82 KW (110HP) LE RHONE 9J
CREW:	1
PRIMARY WEAPON:	1 X 7.7MM (0.303IN) VICKERS OR LEWIS MACHINE GUN
SECONDARY WEAPON:	8 LE PRIEUR ANTI-BALLOON ROCKETS

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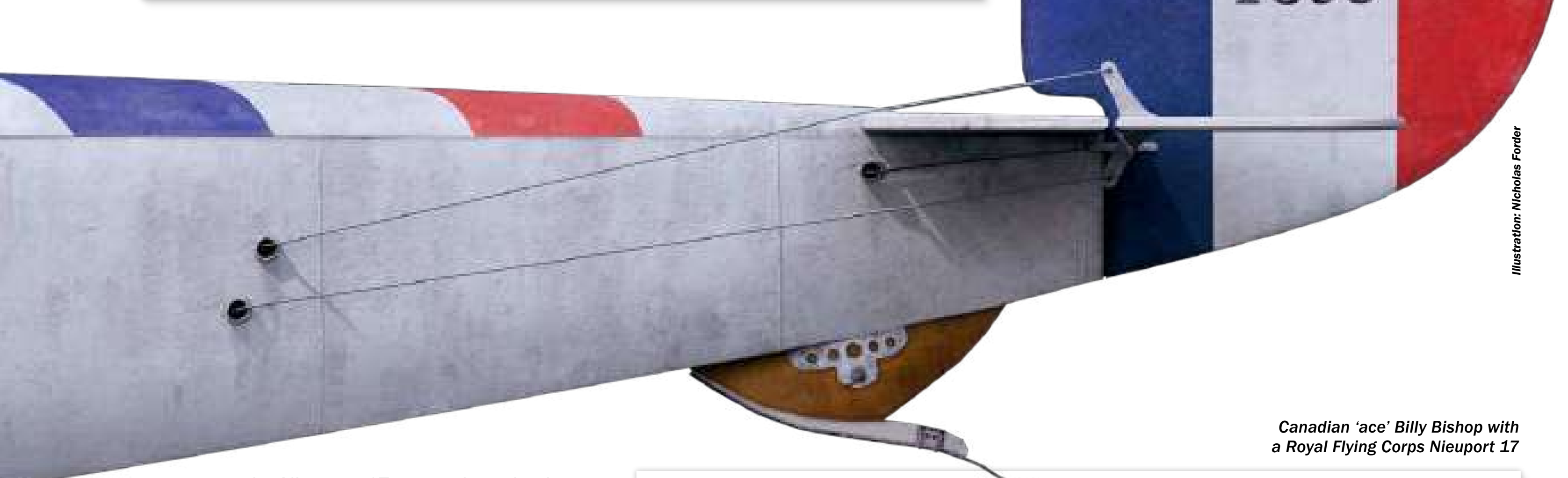

Illustration: Nicholas Forder

The Nieuport 17 entered service in the spring of 1916, when the Entente air forces were on the back foot. The 'Fokker Scourge' had been ongoing for months, with the German Fokker Eindecker holding air superiority over the Western Front. Together with the British de Havilland DH2, the Nieuport 17 put an end to this domination, winning back air superiority for the British and French just in time for their flying services to play important roles in the Battle of the Somme over the summer. With speeds of up to around 160km/h (100mph) and great manoeuvrability, it was an excellent fighter even though lightly armed, and the type kick-started the careers of many aces, including Georges Guynemer, Charles Nungesser and Mick Mannock. Even into the spring of 1917, British ace Albert Ball VC preferred his old Nieuport 17 over his cutting-edge SE5a, often flying it alone looking for prey.

So successful was the type that the Germans even reverse-engineered several captured airframes. They built their own Nieuport 17s and operated them as the Siemens-Schuckert D.I from early 1917, although mostly as fighter trainers.

Canadian 'ace' Billy Bishop with a Royal Flying Corps Nieuport 17

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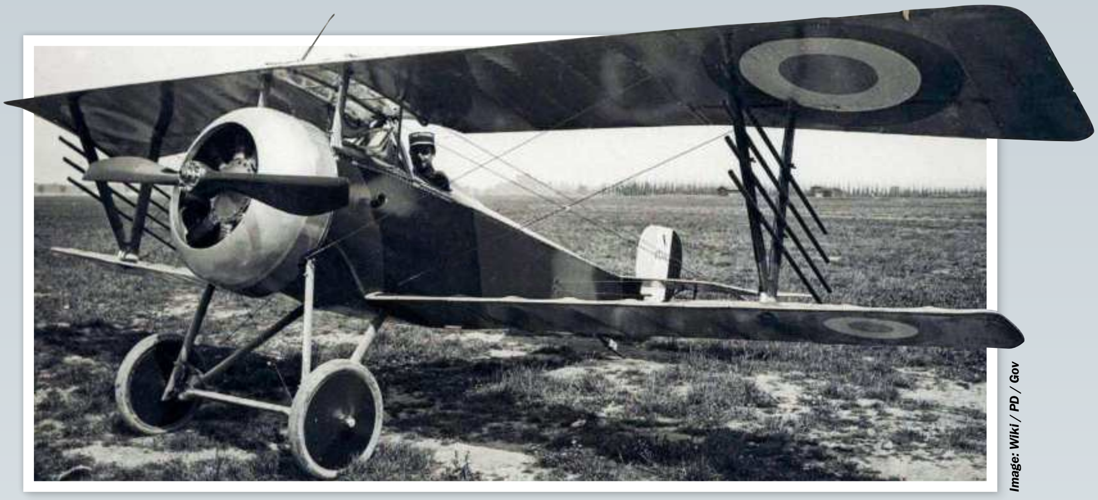
ARMAMENT

The standard French Nieuport 17 carried one 7.7mm (0.303in) Vickers machine gun on the cowling before the cockpit. However, the British and Italians preferred a 7.7mm (0.303in) Lewis Gun mounted above the upper wing. This was problematic, being hard to aim (it was not parallel to the line of flight) and hard to change the drums to reload, but despite this the Lewis Gun was also used by some French pilots. Eight Le Prieur anti-balloon rockets could also be carried, mounted on the outside of the outer inter-wing struts.

***Right:** A Nieuport fitted with Le Prieur anti-balloon rockets; metal plates protected the lower wing from scorching*



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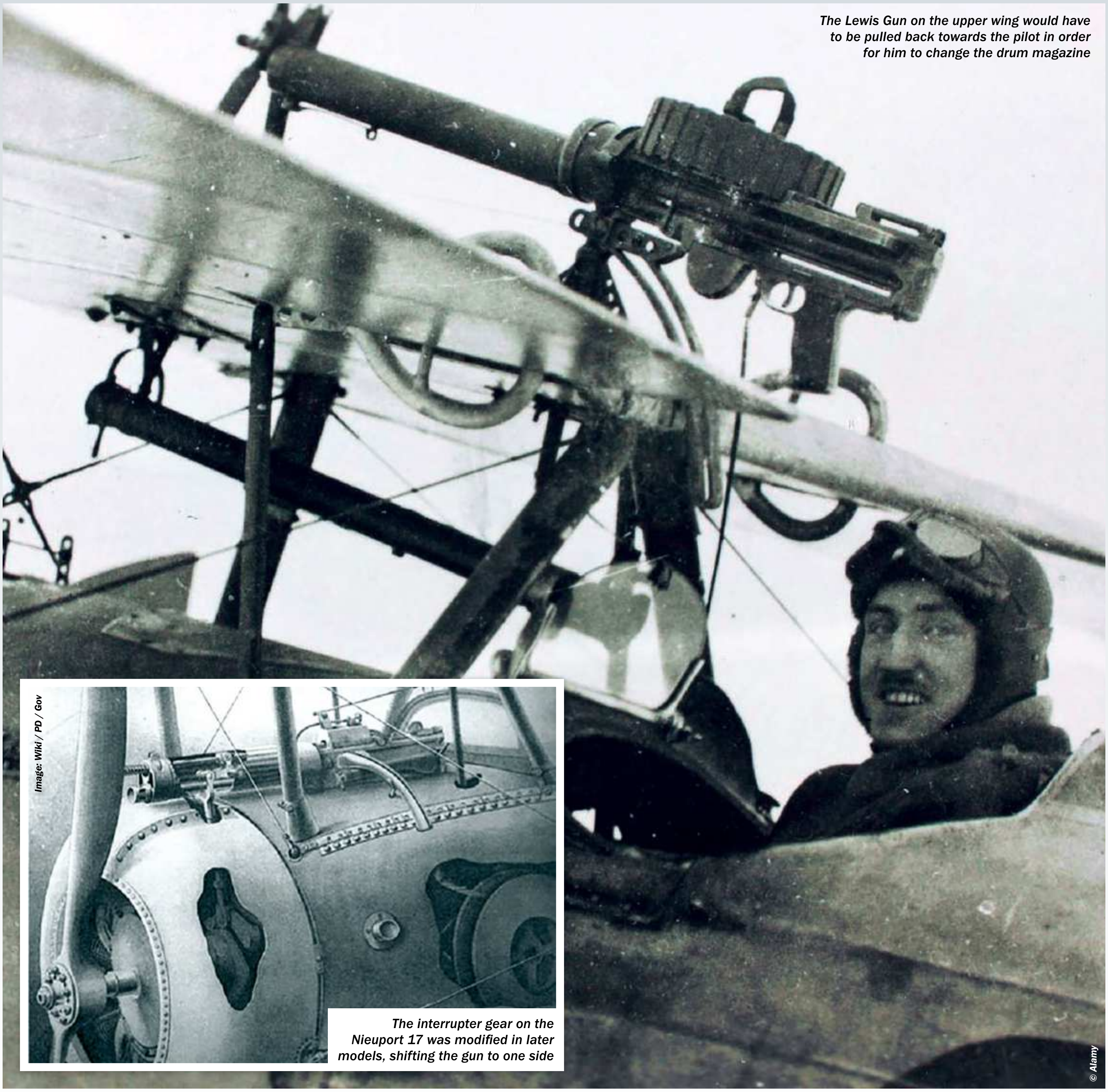

The Lewis Gun on the upper wing would have to be pulled back towards the pilot in order for him to change the drum magazine

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The interrupter gear on the Nieuport 17 was modified in later models, shifting the gun to one side

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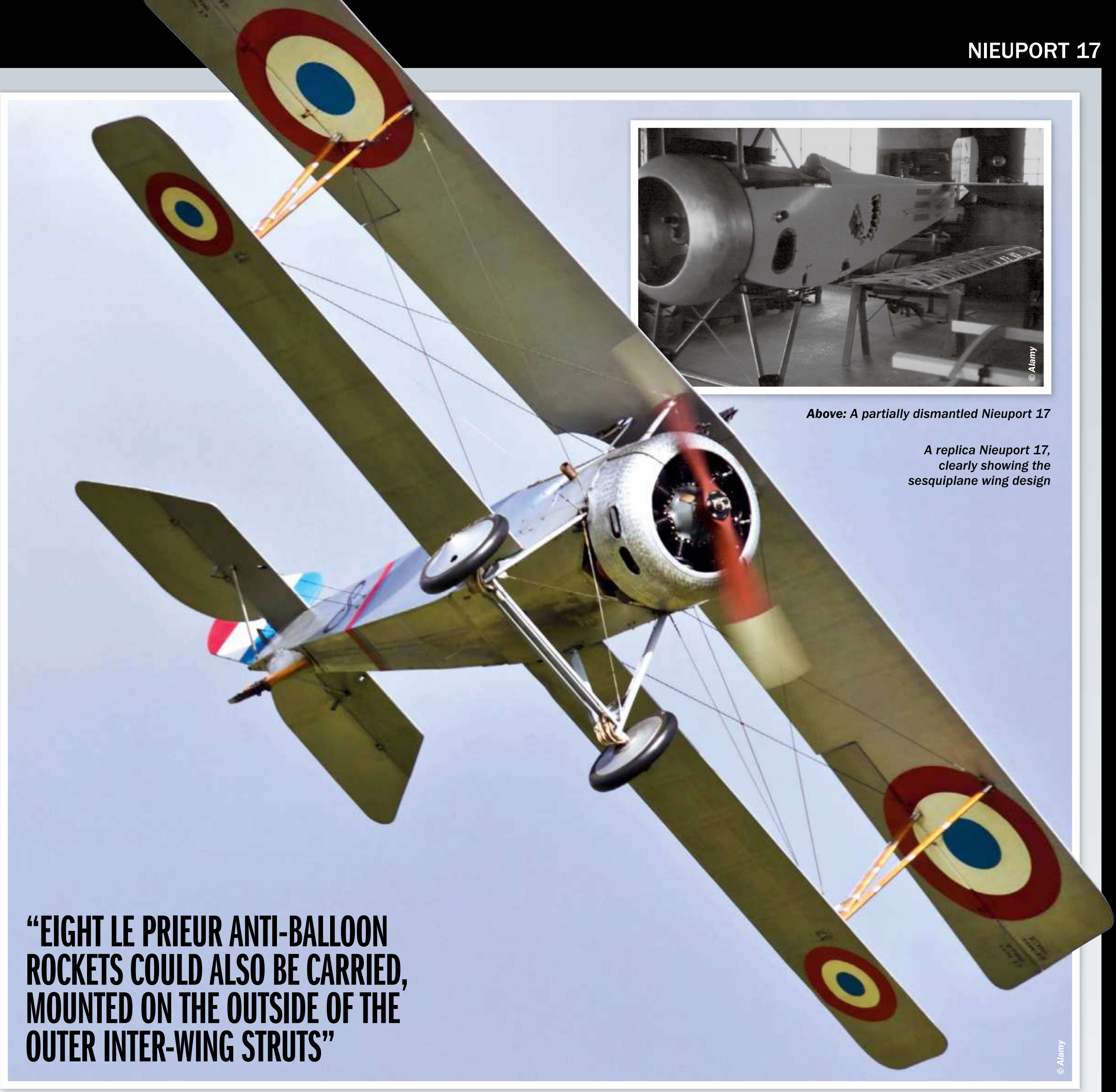

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Above: *A partially dismantled Nieuport 17*

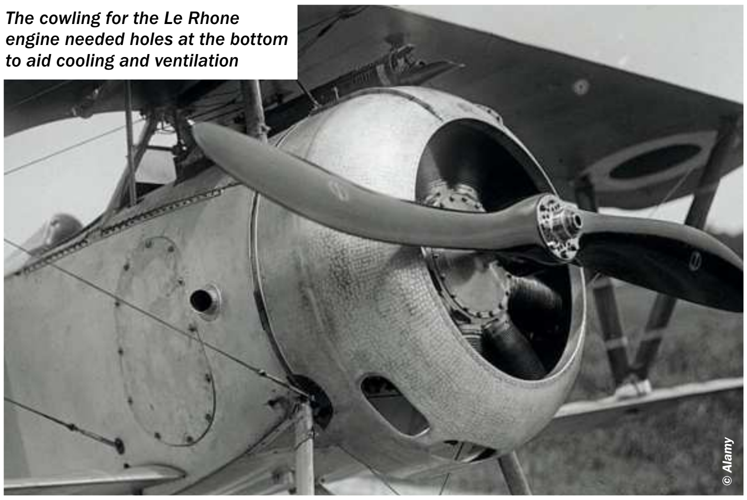
A replica Nieuport 17, clearly showing the sesquiplane wing design

© Alamy

> **“EIGHT LE PRIEUR ANTI-BALLOON ROCKETS COULD ALSO BE CARRIED, MOUNTED ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE OUTER INTER-WING STRUTS”**

DESIGN

The Nieuport 17 had a mostly wooden framework construction, covered in stiffened fabric. The fuselage was rectangular at the front, tapering off to a trapezoid to the rear. The tail was strengthened by having a light metal framework, and the nose forward of the cockpit was aluminum-skinned. The type was a sesquiplane, meaning the lower wing had half the surface area of the upper wing. This meant that only the upper wing had ailerons, and also left the lower wing relatively weak and prone to structural failure under stress.



The cowling for the Le Rhone engine needed holes at the bottom to aid cooling and ventilation

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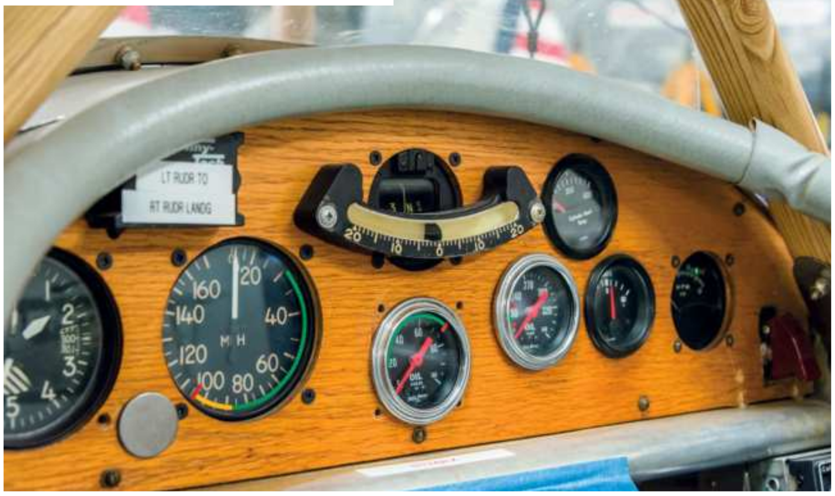
ENGINE

Nieuport 17s had a Le Rhone 9J 82 kW (110hp) rotary engine, or occasionally the similarly rated (and more basic but more expensive) Clerget engine. Both were air-cooled engines, held within a metal cowling with gaps cut into it to aid cooling and allow exhaust fumes to escape. The 9J was considered reliable and several are still flying in vintage or replica aircraft around the world. Later some aircraft were fitted with Le Rhone 97kW (130hp) rotaries, with this more powerful type being dubbed the Nieuport 17bis.

COCKPIT

The Nieuport 17 was unusual in having no instrument panel. Instead, instruments and flight controls were attached to the fabric of the airframe at points around the cockpit. This was rectified in the aircraft used by the British, with panels inserted and the instruments arranged into a more formal pattern. The pilot had a good view, with the sesquiplane lower wing allowing an unobstructed line of sight in front and below. The pilots eyes were in line with the upper wing, giving a good upward view as well.

The Nieuport 17 was a compact aircraft, with correspondingly cramped cockpit



This replica Nieuport 17 follows the British model for having a proper instrument panel

Around 3,600 Nieuport 17s were built, and several countries operated the type into the 1920s

SERVICE HISTORY

The Nieuport 17 entered service with the French flying services in May 1916, and with the British in July of the same year. The new aircraft was an instant success in combat on the Western Front and production of it was rapidly increased, while the naval air services of both countries also adopted the type. Fast and highly manoeuvrable, it was quickly adopted by the other Entente powers too. When the United States entered the First World War in 1917 they also acquired Nieuport 17s, not least because the type was already in use with the American volunteers who were flying in the French Escadrille Lafayette.

In early 1917 the type began to fall behind the newer German fighters that were entering the battle for air domination, but remained in British and French service into late 1917. It also remained in extensive service worldwide. Around 3,600 were built in France or under licence in Britain, Russia and Italy. Japan, Finland, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium and various South American and eastern European countries all operated the type, many of them into the 1920s.

An Italian squadron of Nieuport 17s

A French Nieuport 17 captured by Germans in the autumn of 1916

“THE GERMANS REVERSE-ENGINEERED THE NIEUPORT 17 FROM A CAPTURED MODEL AND ENTERED A MODIFIED VERSION INTO THEIR OWN SERVICE”

All images © Alamy

Sergeant Ian McKay, pictured here in his Parachute Regiment uniform alongside a canine companion

> **"WITHOUT DOUBT SERGEANT MCKAY'S ACTION RETRIEVED A MOST DANGEROUS SITUATION AND WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF THE ATTACK"**
>
> **Ian McKay's posthumous VC citation**

Heroes of the Victoria Cross

IAN McKAY

With his comrades shielding against a hail of machine-gun fire, this courageous young platoon sergeant made the ultimate sacrifice to secure a vital objective in the war to retake the Falklands

WORDS **CHARLES GINGER**

All around him crouched khaki-coloured figures wincing and swearing at the relentless thud of bullets punching holes in the mud and ricocheting off rocks, the only shelter Mount Longdon had to offer its new assailants. Someone screamed as another bullet fired from the ridge above found its mark. They'd already lost a platoon commander to a leg wound, and now they were all sitting ducks. They had to move, had to gain the ridge and silence those guns. Deep down, Sergeant Ian McKay knew he'd have to get the job done.

With a mix of gestures and shouts he summoned three men to his side and, as calmly as he could, instructed them on what they all had to do. Nervous glances were followed by stern nods. Steeling himself against the storm to come, McKay rose up from behind his bullet-riddled shelter and raced up the slope, his comrades sprinting behind him.

McKay had always been prepared to be brave. He'd spent the 12 years prior to the Battle of Mount Longdon training to show courage under fire. Born on 7 May 1953 in the South Yorkshire village of Wortley, by 1970, while still a teenager, McKay successfully navigated the Parachute Regiment's gruelling selection process, and by the following year he was a serving member of the 1st Battalion, or 1 PARA.

Five years serving in Germany, Northern Ireland and other parts of the UK were followed in 1976 by a two-year spell as a corporal instructor. After spending 1978 through to 1980 as part of 3 PARA, McKay returned to Depot (located at Browning Barracks Aldershot). Here he would gain crucial experience in weapons training and climb the ladder to become a platoon sergeant of 4 Platoon, B Company, 3 PARA.

Images © Alamy

A makeshift memorial marks the spot on Mount Longdon, where McKay was killed while taking out a position

Just under two months after McKay's promotion the UK found herself at war. Desperate to distract a struggling populace from Argentina's dire economic situation, not to mention its own ruthless methods of retaining power, the nation's ruling military junta made a fateful miscalculation in April 1982 and invaded the Falkland Islands, situated 1,520km off Argentina's southern tip.

Known in Argentina as Islas Malvinas, the British islands had long been coveted by the leaders of the South American state, military commanders who had already inflamed tensions with the UK on 19 March by slipping a party of scrap metal workers onto South Georgia island to the east of the Falklands. Once ashore (having been guided by Argentine marines) they raised the blue and white flag of Argentina, a clear provocation aimed at the UK. The junta thought the British government would never resort to military force in the face of further Argentinian aggression, but the speed and scale of the UK's response to the invasion of the Falkland Islands on 2 April would prove them spectacularly wrong.

By 11 June, after almost ten weeks of bloodshed, the UK's military forces were poised to deliver the coup de grace to a determined but doomed enemy. Having retreated to their defensive perimeter around Port Stanley (the islands' capital), Argentinian troops were dug in on the slopes of Mount Longdon ready to repel any British thrusts towards their remaining stronghold. According to one of McKay's letters home, nature would also play her part in trying to thwart them: "I have never known a more bleak, windswept and wet place. We spend our life with wet feet. You cannot walk 50 paces anywhere without walking into a bog."

After trekking across the island of East Falkland, 3rd Battalion conducted a silent assault on the mountain throughout the night of 11/12 June. Once the initial objectives had been secured, McKay found himself tasked with clearing the heavily defended north side of the east/west ridge that spanned the mountain.

Withering fire from enemy machine-gun nests quickly stalled 4 Platoon's advance, and as the men sought refuge they encountered comrades from 5 Platoon. While the majority of the British troops huddled behind rocks the commander of 5 Platoon led McKay and a cluster of troops towards the ridge in a bid to scout out the enemy positions. Within seconds a bullet pierced the commander's leg, and as he was carried off to safety overall command fell to McKay, who was now in charge of an increasingly perilous situation. The only way to avoid a massacre was to charge the enemy.

As McKay pounded towards the ridge bullets whistled and whirled past, felling two of his accomplices and killing the other. Yet somehow he managed to crest the top of the ridge unscathed and descend on a concrete bunker still spitting fire at the men below.

Coolly, methodically, he began to detach the grenades strapped to his belt, extract the pins and toss them inside the bunker as panicked Argentinian troops started to spill out into the crisp morning air. Explosions and juddering spurts of gunfire erupted, and something smashed into McKay and sent him reeling. The world shifted and blurred, but as McKay's legs buckled and he collapsed onto the roof of the bunker he knew that he'd saved the lives of his men.

"ONCE WE HAD THREE SONS. NOW WE HAVE NONE. IT'S ALMOST MORE THAN WE CAN BEAR"

Kenneth McKay, Ian's father, during a wreath-laying ceremony on 13 June 1998

The 29-year-old's selfless actions were crucial in clearing a path to taking control of Mount Longdon and thereby the road to Port Stanley and victory. A helmet propped on the end of a rifle formed part of a temporary grave to mark where he fell, a poignant symbol of his courage that was soon followed by a posthumous Victoria Cross. His incredible bravery was fully acknowledged in the citation that accompanied his VC award.

Describing the aftermath of the failed attempt to reconnoitre the enemy positions, the citation stated: "It was clear that instant action was needed if the advance was not to falter and increasing casualties to ensue. Sergeant McKay decided to convert this reconnaissance into an attack in order to eliminate the enemy positions. He was in no doubt of the strength and deployment of the enemy as he undertook this attack. He issued orders, and taking three men with him, broke cover and charged the enemy position.

"The assault was met by a hail of fire. The Corporal was seriously wounded, a Private killed and another wounded. Despite these losses Sergeant McKay, with complete disregard for his own safety, continued to charge the enemy position alone. On reaching it he dispatched the enemy with grenades, thereby relieving the position of beleaguered 4 and 5 Platoons, who were now able to redeploy with relative safety. Sergeant McKay, however, was killed at the moment of victory, his body falling on the bunker."

McKay's body was flown home after the war (which ended just two days after his death) and was reburied at Aldershot Military Cemetery. Hailed by one of the last men to see him alive, Colour Sergeant Brian Faulkner, as "the bravest of the brave", McKay left behind a widow, Marica, who in later years made the tough decision to sell her husband's medals to Lord Michael Ashcroft. Today they are proudly on display in the Ashcroft Gallery at the Imperial War Museum in London.

McKay also left a stepson, Don (from a previous relationship of Marica's), his daughter Melanie. His heartbroken parents, Kenneth and Freda, had already tragically had to bury McKay's older brothers after their deaths caused by cystic fibrosis. They, along with the men who fought beside McKay, will never forget the last Victoria Cross of the 20th century – earned by a man who willingly charged at death in order to save others.

Ian McKay's headstone at Aldershot Military Cemetery. In 2007, to mark the 25th anniversary of his death, his mother Freda opened an accommodation block at the Defence Academy Shrivenham

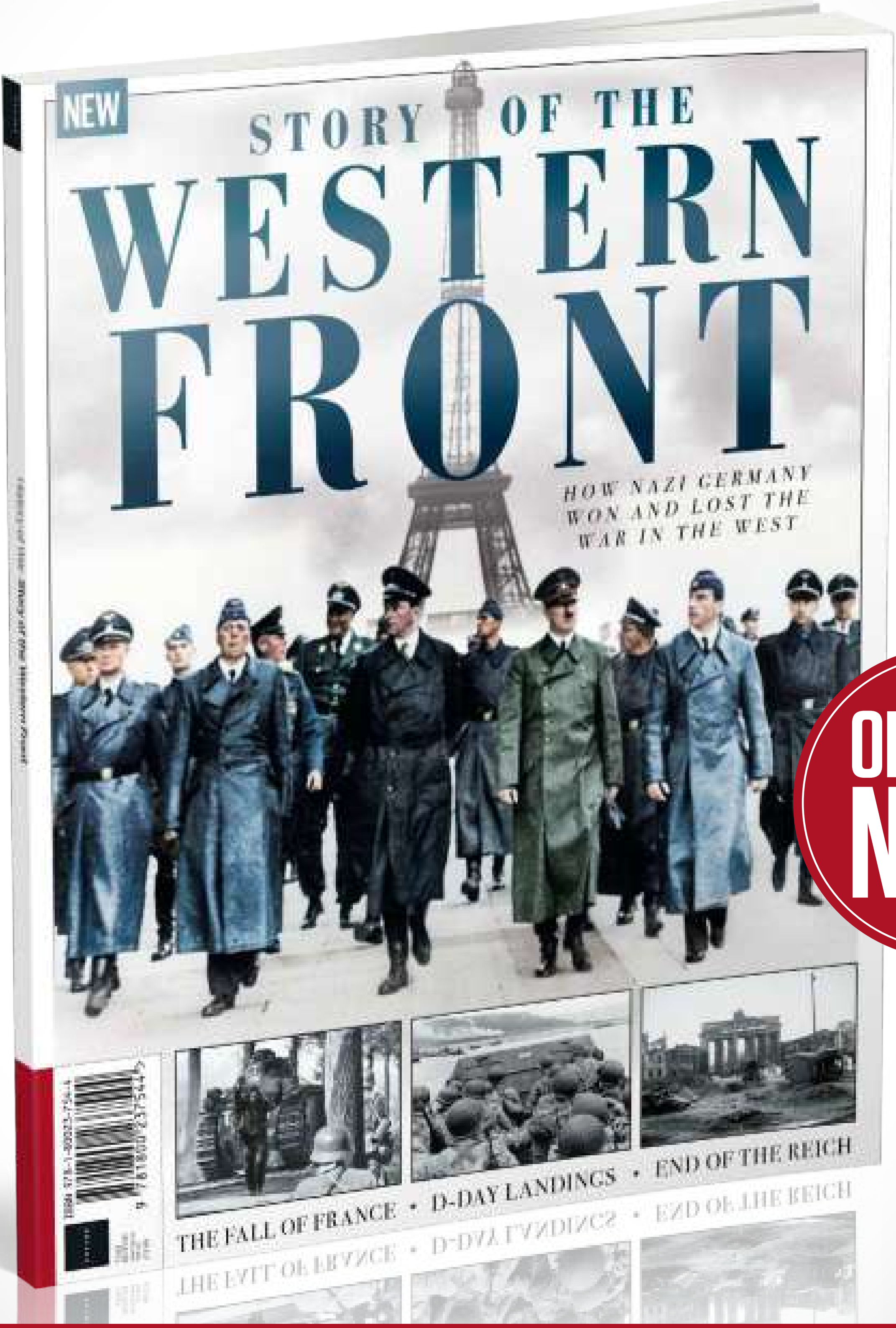
Soldiers carry out first aid on an injured comrade on Mount Longdon

Images © Alamy

The barren slopes of Mount Longdon, a strategically vital position that McKay's valiant actions helped to prise from the enemy

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE STRUGGLE TO FREE THE WEST FROM NAZI RULE

By the end of 1940 Nazi Germany was the undisputed ruler of most of Europe, yet Britain refused to surrender, and with American support she soon started to fight back. This is the story of the battle to liberate occupied Europe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HOME FRONT

78 AMERICA'S 'FEW'

Historian Bill Yenne discusses the story of the US Marine Corps' pilot aces during the Guadalcanal campaign

66

Munich: The Edge of War writer and director Q&A

68

New Edith Cavell archive opens to the public

82

Artefact of War: Tudor champion armour

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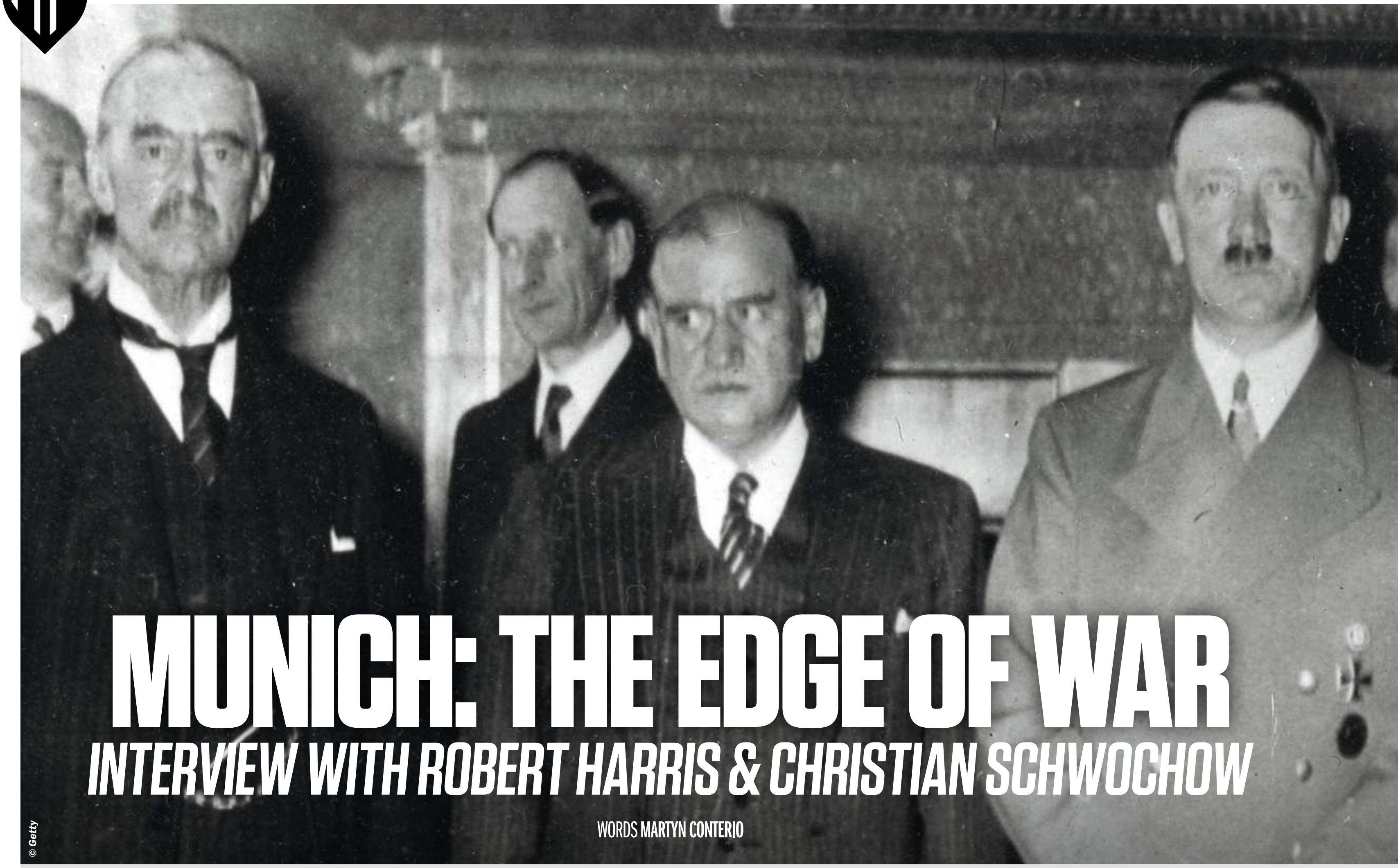
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MUNICH: THE EDGE OF WAR

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT HARRIS & CHRISTIAN SCHWOCHOW

WORDS **MARTYN CONTERIO**

Novelist Robert Harris and director Christian Schwochow discuss the upcoming thriller about the 1938 Munich Agreement and plead sympathy for tarnished British PM Neville Chamberlain

In late September 1938, British prime minister Neville Chamberlain met German dictator Adolf Hitler in Munich. As the film title *Munich: The Edge of War* suggests, this conference occurred when the Nazi ruler threatened a large-scale conflict in Europe due to his aggressive policy known as Lebensraum (Living Space), where the Germans sought to colonise territories to the east. Billed by Chamberlain as "peace for our time" – words criticised almost as soon as he'd uttered them – the Munich Agreement might as well have been written in disappearing ink, because it took less than a year for the Nazi regime to break its word and invade Poland, on 1 September 1939.

What if, though, the prime minister's infamous appeasement of Hitler actually bought valuable time for Britain and its allies? At the Corinthia Hotel in central London, just off Whitehall and a stone's throw from Downing Street itself, Robert Harris, upon whose 2017 novel the new film by Netflix is based, tells *History of War* he always thought Chamberlain deserved more respect for believing in political solutions before rushing into war. "I don't want to whitewash him, because in the end the policy failed and he had too much faith in his own ability," says Harris. "He made a mistake saying 'peace for our time' but I don't know what else a British prime minster at that time could have done."

The film's director, Christian Schwochow, a German national, takes the same view as Harris. "I am for a man who believed in peace and who tried very hard not to waste so many lives [by going to war]," he explains later that day during a telephone interview. "Hitler was a difficult man to make deals with and he [Chamberlain] knew Hitler wasn't a man to rely on. I have sympathy for a man who believed in politics and diplomacy."

> "THERE'S A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY ON DEMOCRACIES TO TRY EVERYTHING THEY CAN FOR PEACE. IF YOU DO THAT, WHEN A WAR COMES YOU HAVE THE MORAL STRENGTH TO BELIEVE YOUR CAUSE IS JUST"

Harris undertook extensive research on the topic, including reading Cabinet papers and delving into various archives, and had a long-standing interest in the event, having presented a documentary for the BBC in 1988 to mark the 50th anniversary. He also began writing a version of his novel some 30 years ago, even before his bestselling alternate history nightmare *Fatherland* (1992) – where Hitler wins the war – was published to acclaim. He set it aside as he couldn't break the spine of the story. "I'd always thought [about] writing a novel about a private secretary to Chamberlain flying on the plane to Munich, but I could never really get beyond that [initial idea]," he says.

Munich: The Edge of War crafts a fictional story around real-life events. It involves a German-speaking English translator, Hugh Legat (George McKay), and an old Oxford friend of his, the English-speaking German translator on Hitler's team, Paul von Hartman (Jannis Niewöhner), attempting to warn the British delegation of Hitler's warmongering plans via a top-secret document purloined from Nazi top brass. Was creating the story a challenge, given the audience knows in advance the meeting is doomed to failure? "It's funny, you know, because the basis of Greek drama was you always knew what was

Chamberlain (far left) and the British delegation pictured with Hitler at their 1938 meeting in Munich

going to happen in the end," says Harris. "It's rather like the Titanic: it's riveting because you know what's going to happen and I think it's the same [here]. We know the Munich Agreement is going to fail but, oddly enough, knowing that doesn't detract from the enjoyment [of watching the film]."

One element of *Munich: The Edge of War* many might be less familiar with is the Oster conspiracy. Led by Oberstleutnant Hans Oster, he and a select coterie of military officers were convinced Hitler was dragging the country into a war it was unprepared for. Harris was never convinced the plot was as serious as the better-known Operation Valkyrie, though. "It was only in the beginning of 1938, when Hitler started to commission plans for an attack against Czechoslovakia, that it started to crystalise into something a bit more serious," he explains. "Chiefly around the German Foreign Ministry, they were anti-Nazi elements. I personally don't think the conspiracy in the autumn of 1938 was particularly serious. They met and talked, but I can't see how they thought with 50 men they could take down Hitler." Schwochow says he had heard of the Oster conspiracy but "not the exact details" before learning more during the pre-production phase of the film.

Shot mainly in the UK, including around Liverpool, the filmmaker and his team also spent time in Munich, Berlin and Dresden. Shooting in Germany was problematic however, as Schwochow points out: "It was difficult in Germany because many places were destroyed in the Second World War." Fortuitously, one very important building in particular survived and they were able to shoot there: Munich's Führerbau (Fuhrer's Building), where the film recreates the conference in the very same rooms as they occurred in real life. "I was very happy to shoot at the Führerbau," reveals Schwochow. "It's not a set, it's the interior and exterior of the place where it all happened. The moment where they sign the agreement – it's the room in which they signed the agreement. That was magical to all of us and very… deep, in a way. To recreate that, and we felt a lot of weight and responsibility."

Harris was impressed by the strong production values and use of props, such as Hermann Göring's private train (which was used to represent Hitler's train). "They worked hard to make [period details] accurate and the film benefits hugely from that," he says, genuinely full of praise for what the art design crews achieved. "You really get a sense of what the conference was like."

As ever with historical films, they resonant with the present and remind us of our past mistakes. Harris sums up: "There's a moral responsibility on democracies to try everything they can for peace. If you do that, when a war comes you have the moral strength to believe your cause is just. What I take from Munich is it's right to keep on talking and to try to find some means of agreement, even with people that you detest."

Inset above, left to right: *Sandra Huller as Helen Winter and Jannis Niewöhner as Paul Hartman; Jeremy Irons plays Neville Chamberlain; Director Christian Schwochow discusses a scene with Irons*

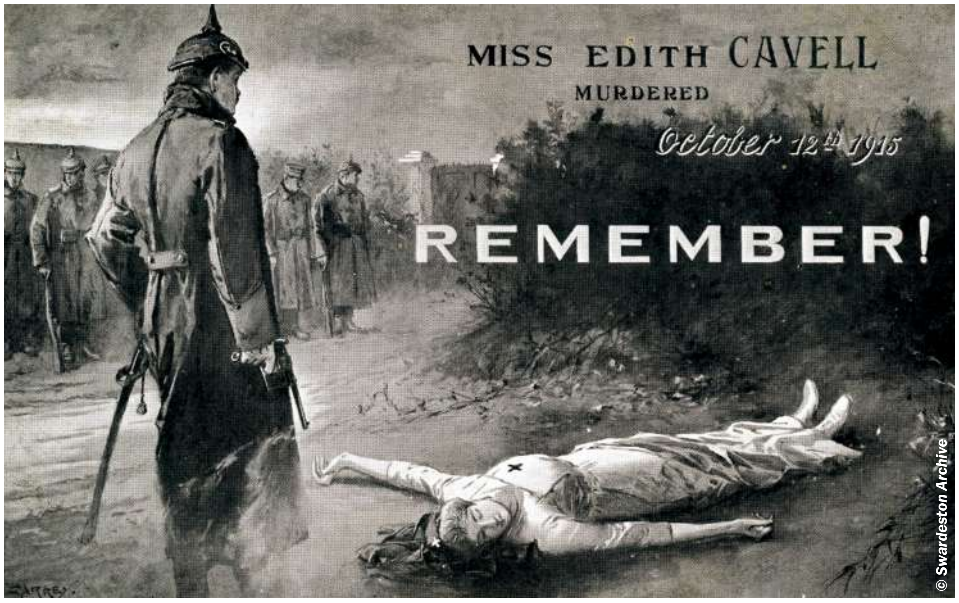
© Getty

Left: *British PM Neville Chamberlain shows the press his infamous appeasement deal with Adolf Hitler in 1938*

Munich: The Edge of War **is released by Netflix on 22 January, 2022**

MUSEUMS & EVENTS

Learn about Edith Cavell's story in a new archive, the Halifax Explosion commemorations in Canada and a touring Battle of Britain exhibition in Wales



© Swardeston Archive

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Above: *Edith Cavell is an important figure in modern nursing alongside more widely known people such as Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole*

Left: *This dramatised depiction of Cavell's execution on a 1915 postcard is one of many items in the Swardeston Archive collection*

Discover the story of WWI nurse Edith Cavell

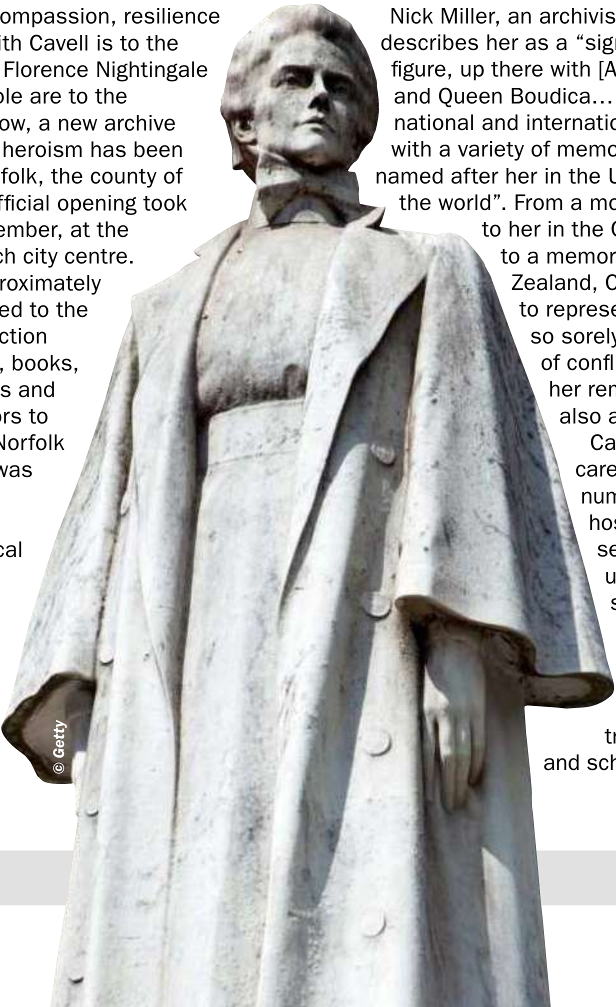
The exploits of Cavell, a nurse who saved countless lives in World War I, are highlighted in a new archive

Known for her compassion, resilience and bravery, Edith Cavell is to the Great War what Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole are to the Crimean War. Now, a new archive recognising her heroism has been launched in Norfolk, the county of her birth. The official opening took place on 3 December, at the Forum in Norwich city centre. Comprising approximately 650 items related to the nurse, the collection includes letters, books, articles, pictures and artefacts. Visitors to Swardeston in Norfolk – where Cavell was born and raised – will be able to view the historical material upon advance request.

Nick Miller, an archivist for the project, describes her as a "significant Norfolk figure, up there with [Admiral] Nelson and Queen Boudica… [She is] a national and international figure too, with a variety of memorials and places named after her in the UK and around the world". From a mountain dedicated to her in the Canadian Rockies to a memorial bridge in New Zealand, Cavell has come to represent the humanity so sorely needed in times of conflict. However, her remarkable story is also a tragic one.

Cavell began her career working in numerous English hospitals over several years until, in 1907, she accepted a position in Brussels as matron for Belgium's first training hospital and school for nurses. Her pioneering work effectively established the nursing profession in the country. She had been visiting her mother in Norfolk immediately before the war broke out but headed back, stating: "My duty is with my nurses." In German-occupied Belgium she treated casualties from both sides. Cavell later became part of a network of people sheltering Allied soldiers and Belgians eligible for military service, ultimately arranging for their escape to neutral Holland. She assisted some 200 servicemen prior to her arrest by German authorities on 5 August, 1915. She was subsequently sentenced to death and shot by a firing squad on 12 October, 1915, aged 49.

Despite her execution provoking international outrage at the time, including in the then-neutral United States, her efforts have since largely faded from public view. However, Mr Miller believes that Swardeston's archive helps shed light on her life once more. Speaking exclusively with *History of War*, he says: "For nine months Edith and other non-combatant colleagues put their lives on the line just like those who fought. Her conclusion that 'I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone' still challenges all of us today.'



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To commemorate the centenary of World War I, English Heritage upgraded Cavell's monument from a Grade II to a Grade I Listing

For more information visit: www.edithcavell.org.uk

Canada's 104th Halifax Explosion Anniversary

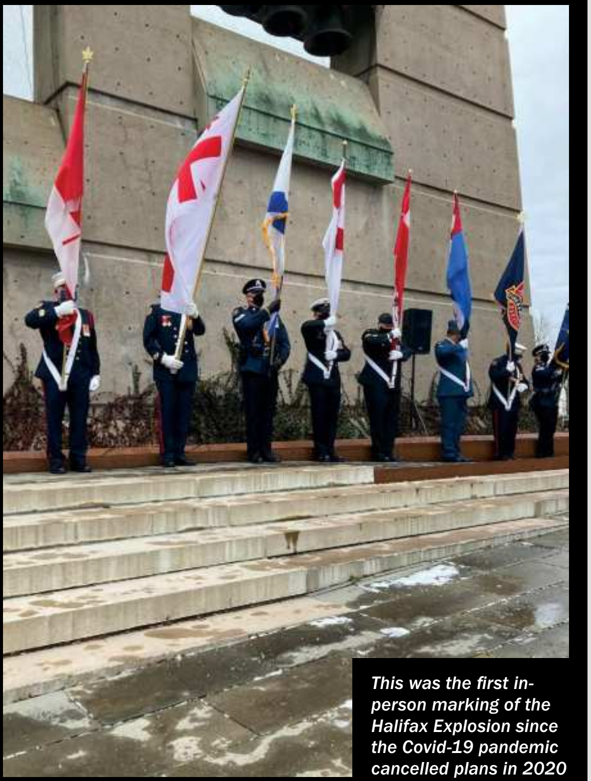
The Canadian city of Halifax has paid tribute to the 2,000 lives lost in a tragic accident that occurred over a century ago

Descendants, dignitaries and members of the public have held an annual event in the provincial capital of Nova Scotia, Canada, to commemorate the 1917 Halifax Explosion. December 6, 2021, marked the 104th anniversary since two vessels – one carrying 2,925 metric tons of munitions – collided in the Halifax Harbour, causing the largest human-made explosion prior to the 1945 atomic bomb detonations.

At precisely 9:04am – the moment of the blast over a century ago – ship horns and bells sounded from the water in recognition of the 2,000 lives lost in the tragic First World War disaster. Meanwhile, at the Halifax Explosion Memorial Bell Tower in Fort Needham Park, several acts of remembrance took place. This included a moment of silence, the laying of wreaths, an indigenous Mi'kmaq smudging ceremony, and moving remarks made by guest speaker and Halifax Explosion descendant Diane Walker.

Also in attendance was Marilyn Elliott, whose father, Eric Davidson, was blinded during the disaster at two years old and whose story she has told in her book *The Blind Mechanic*. Speaking exclusively with *History of War*, she said of the anniversary: "We come together on this day each year to commemorate the tragic loss of men, women and children on December 6, 1917, and to honour the resilience of survivors of the Halifax Explosion. This is always an emotional time for me and my family."

Descendants of those who survived the Halifax Explosion wore symbolic red scarves at the commemoration service



This was the first in-person marking of the Halifax Explosion since the Covid-19 pandemic cancelled plans in 2020

For more information: www.halifax.ca

Wales and the Battle of Britain

Touring across Wales, this exhibition highlights the nation's role in the Battle of Britain

First opened in Cardiff in September 2021, the exhibition entitled Wales and the Britain of Britain will continue touring the nation until later this year. The display, which highlights the contribution of Welsh pilots in the Second World War, had been initially set to mark the battle's 80th anniversary but was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Now the exhibition will run until October 2022, enabling visitors to discover the remarkable and often harrowing stories of the pilots who helped defend Britain during its darkest hour.

Featured will be tales like that of Sergeant Glyn Griffiths, who shot down seven German planes, as well as the bravery of Welsh squadron commanders such as Edward Graham, who led his flight of six fighters to attack more than 50 enemy aircraft. The initiative, created by RAF Historian Dr Lynsey Shaw, Air Commodore Adrian Williams and coordinated by Squadron Leader John Dunn, also pays tribute to the Welshmen who lost their lives in the fighting.

Williams says of the continuing tour: "I am especially pleased that we have been able to link up with schools across Wales so that Welsh children are able to find out not just about one of the defining battles of the Second World War, but also about the extraordinary contribution by the Welsh men and women serving in RAF Fighter Command 80 years ago. Many more Welsh locations are expected to be added to the tour throughout 2022."

Air Commodore Williams showing a group of school children around the Cardiff exhibition

© Cpl Cathy Sharples, 614 Sqn Media Flight

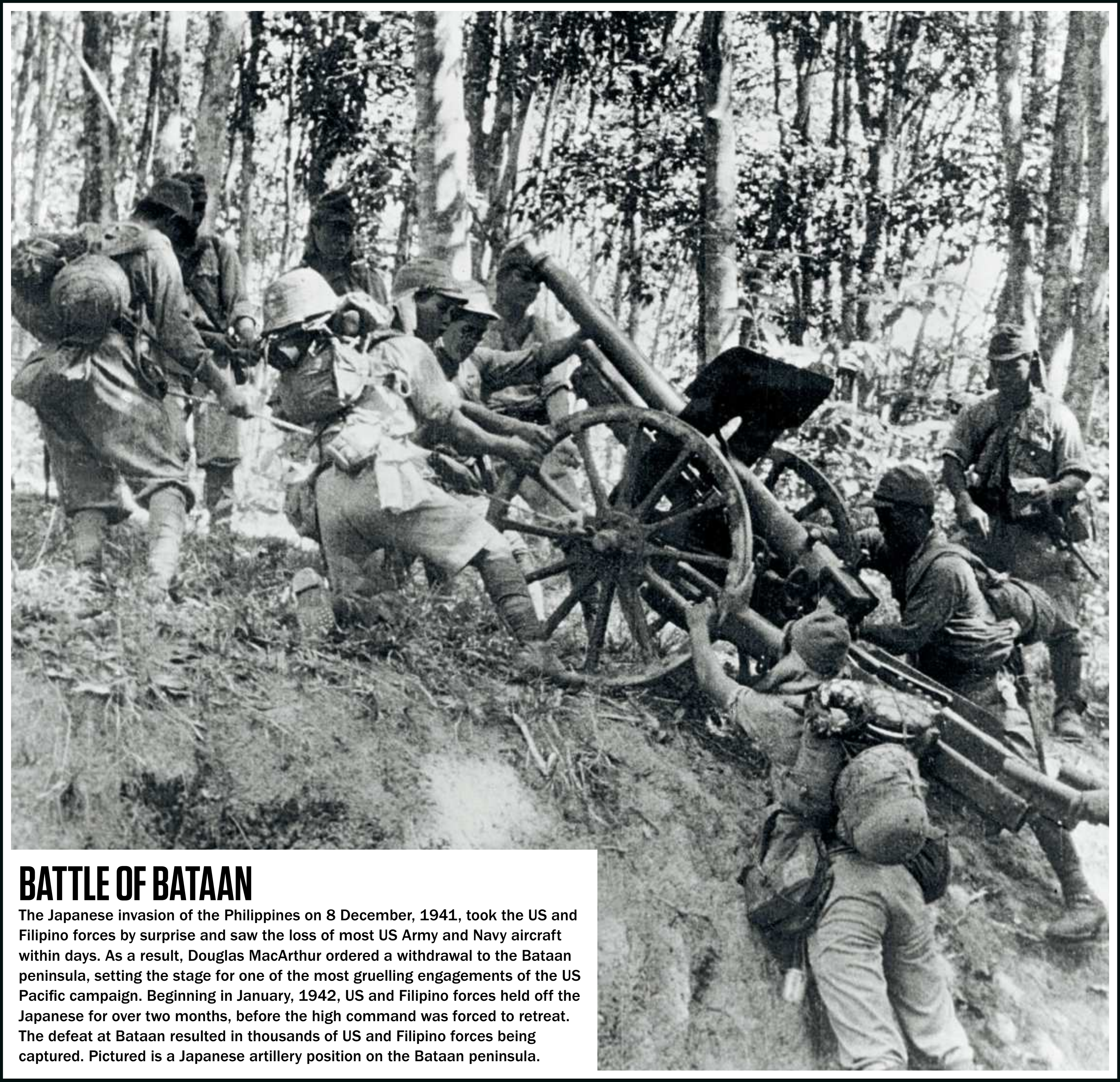
Air Commodore Williams and Councillor Maureen Webber, the Armed Forces Champions for Rhondda Cynon Taff, at the Pontypool exhibition

© Squadron Leader John Dunn

WWII THIS MONTH...

JANUARY 1942

To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, **History of War** will be taking a look at some of the key events taking place during each month of the conflict



BATTLE OF BATAAN

The Japanese invasion of the Philippines on 8 December, 1941, took the US and Filipino forces by surprise and saw the loss of most US Army and Navy aircraft within days. As a result, Douglas MacArthur ordered a withdrawal to the Bataan peninsula, setting the stage for one of the most gruelling engagements of the US Pacific campaign. Beginning in January, 1942, US and Filipino forces held off the Japanese for over two months, before the high command was forced to retreat. The defeat at Bataan resulted in thousands of US and Filipino forces being captured. Pictured is a Japanese artillery position on the Bataan peninsula.

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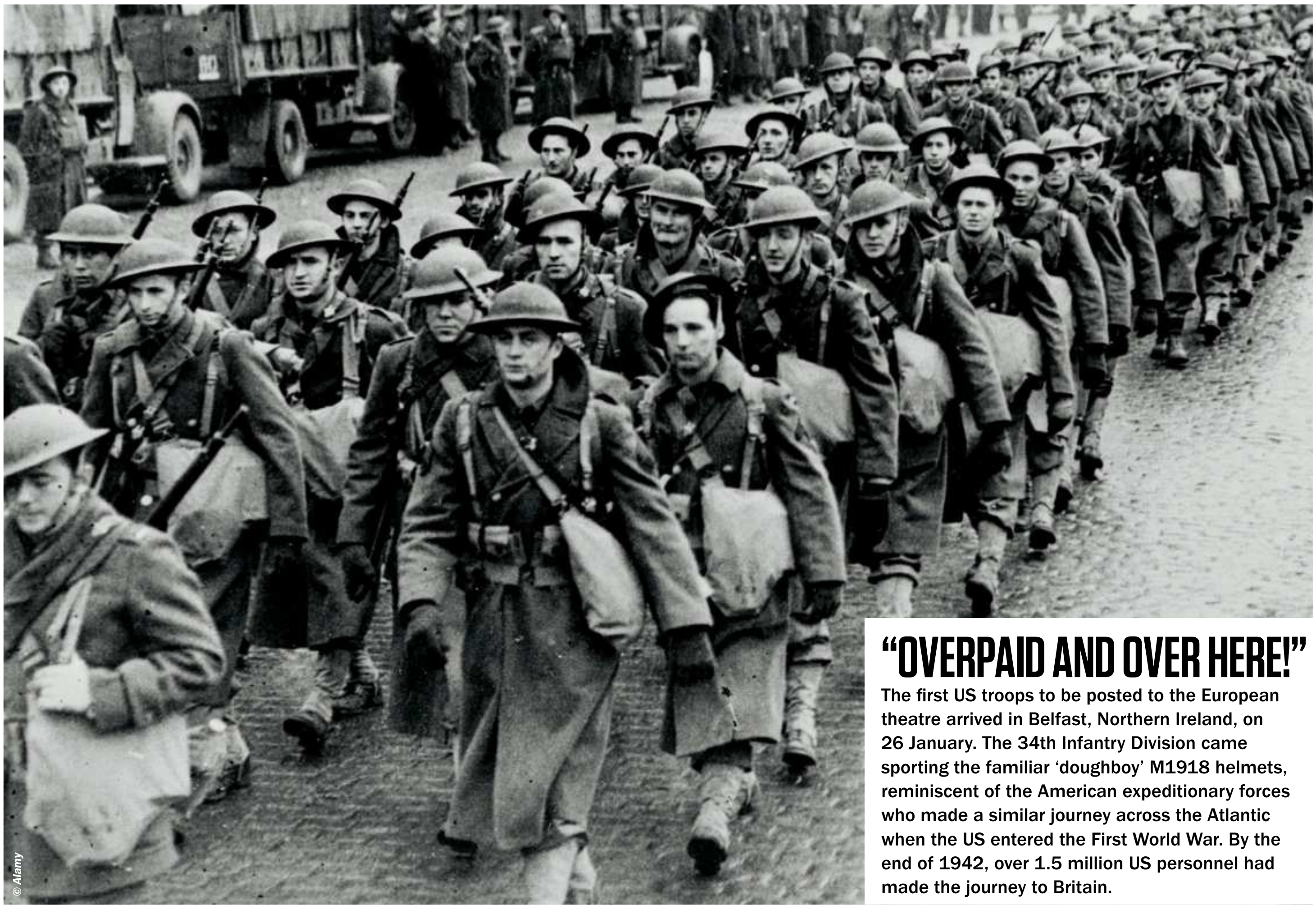

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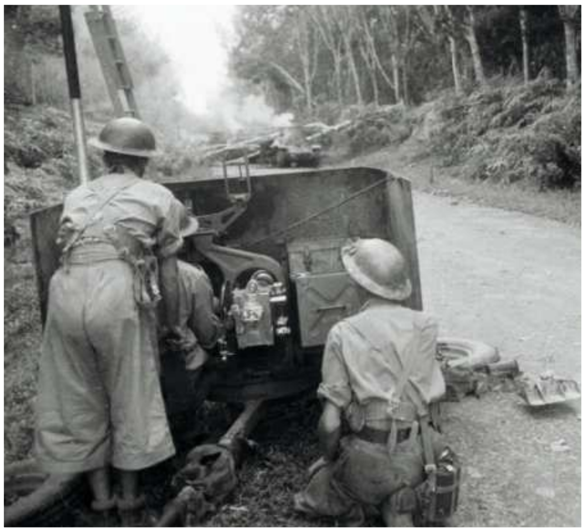
"OVERPAID AND OVER HERE!"

The first US troops to be posted to the European theatre arrived in Belfast, Northern Ireland, on 26 January. The 34th Infantry Division came sporting the familiar 'doughboy' M1918 helmets, reminiscent of the American expeditionary forces who made a similar journey across the Atlantic when the US entered the First World War. By the end of 1942, over 1.5 million US personnel had made the journey to Britain.

FALL OF MALAYA

The Japanese invasion of Malaya gradually made ground throughout December and January, 1941-42. British, Australian and Indian forces kept up a defiant withdrawal south, holding the Japanese armour and infantry at bay as best they could in a rearguard action. The last major battle of the campaign took place around the Gemensah bridge and the Muar River in Johore. Pictured is an Australian two-pounder anti-tank gun of the 2/4th Australian Anti-Tank Regiment, commanded by Sergeant Charles Parsons (left), firing on Japanese tanks near Bakri, on 18 January.



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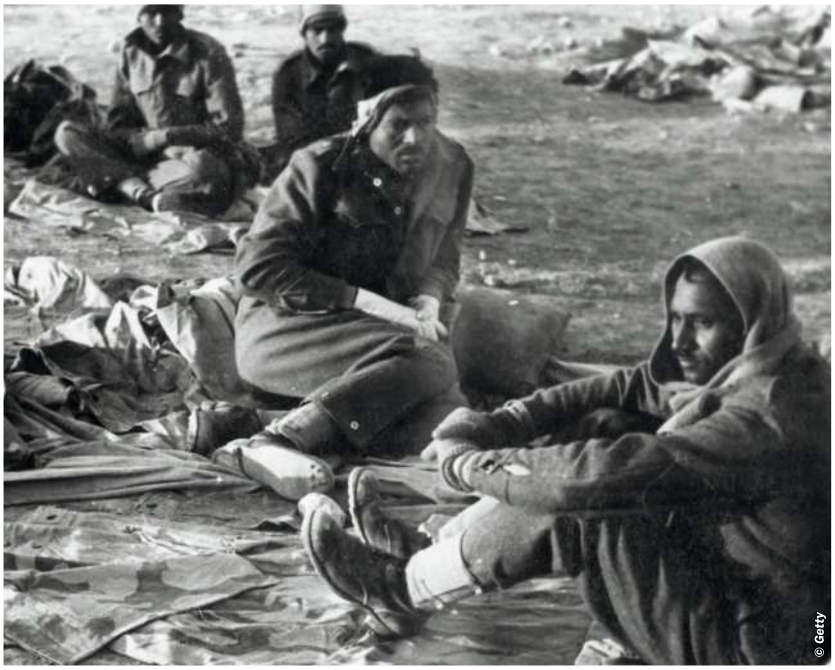


© Getty

FALL OF BENGHAZI

Captured Indian troops are pictured after the fall of Benghazi to Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps. Buoyed by the arrival of much-needed tanks, fuel, anti-tank guns and other supplies in Tripoli, Rommel began a fresh offensive to recapture Cyrenaica, Libya, from the Allied 8th Army. Known as his Second Offensive, the Axis attack succeeded in pushing the Allied forces back to the Gazala Line, west of Tobruk.

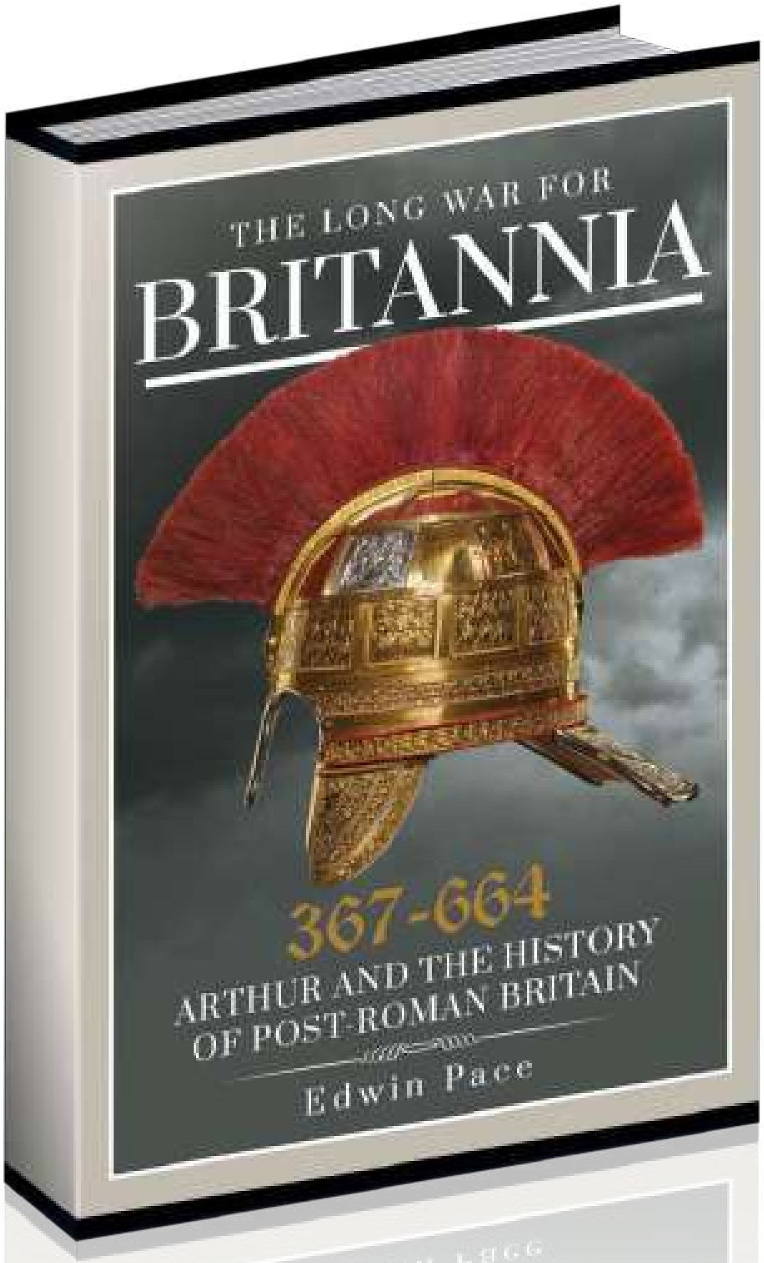
REVIEWS

Our pick of the latest military history books

THE LONG WAR FOR BRITANNIA

367-664 ARTHUR AND THE HISTORY OF POST-ROMAN BRITAIN

THIS NEW HISTORY OF THE FOUNDATIONS OF ENGLAND IDENTIFIES ARTHUR AND NAMES THE REAL KING BEHIND UTHER PENDRAGON



Author: Edwin Pace **Publisher:** Pen & Sword
Price: £25 **On sale:** Out now

History is difficult without sources. For the two centuries between the Romans leaving in 410 and the mission of St Augustine, who arrived in Kent in 597, we have the barest handful of contemporary documents. It might not matter, if not for the fact that these centuries were the foundation of everything that happened afterwards in Britain: the Romano-Celtic Britannia that slipped out of history at the start of the 5th century reappeared in the 7th century as a country divided, with Anglo-Saxon kingdoms controlling what would become England, Welsh-speaking princedoms in Wales, and Scotland split between Pictish and Irish kingdoms.

Later historians, starting with Bede and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and going on to medieval writers, told the history of these missing centuries, recounting how the pagan Anglo-Saxons had arrived in Britain and displaced the native Britons. But these were histories written centuries after the events they described, and over the last half century historians and archaeologists have grown increasingly sceptical about the value of these accounts. In particular, the findings of archaeologists have served to cast doubt on the one-off departure of the Romans and the ethnic cleansing narrative of the Anglo-Saxon conquest.

However, on its own, archaeology provides snapshots: it struggles to construct a narrative. Abandoning the ancient sources has left us in an ahistorical darkness, with almost no named actors. In *The Long War for Britannia*, Edwin Pace has stepped bravely into the dark, mounting a thorough examination and defence of the ancient sources.

His argument is based in large part upon systematising the differences between the various accounts of the time. Pace argues that many of the discrepancies that have caused historians to discredit writers such as the 9th-century Nennius were caused by mistakes the medieval authors made in trying to fit dates originally calculated by the Roman consular calendar and insular regnal dating into the Anno Domini system adopted by the Venerable Bede. Pace also argues that the key contemporary writer, Gildas, who wrote his *On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain* around 530 by Pace's reckoning, can be understood by placing his work into the theological framework of the monk. Working off these arguments, Pace concludes that there really was a King Arthur and that he can be identified as the Proud Tyrant of Gildas' polemic – an unusual but fascinating conclusion.

Pace goes on to identify other people from legend as real historical characters, most notably arguing the Uther Pendragon was actually the 7th-century Mercian King Penda, the last great pagan Anglo-Saxon king. With his mastery of the written and archaeological sources, Pace has mounted a thorough and compelling argument for elements from the ancient authors as being worthy of the attention of serious historians. Many historians and archaeologists will disagree with Pace's conclusions but, together with Miles Russell's recent book *Arthur and the Kings of Britain*, there is now a serious, if not necessarily convincing, argument for looking at the ancient chroniclers afresh. *The Long War for Britannia* is highly recommended for anyone with a deep interest in the roots of England. **EA**

THE LEDGER

THE STORY OF HOW AFGHANISTAN WAS ABANDONED AND THROWN INTO DISARRAY BY THE ABRUPT WITHDRAWAL OF WESTERN MILITARY FORCES

Authors: David Kilcullen and Greg Mills **Publisher:** Hurst **Price:** £14.99 **On sale:** Out now

The hasty and, it might be argued, shameful abandonment of Afghanistan by Western troops in August 2021 turned back the clock on a nation that was gradually emerging from the darkness of Muslim fundamentalist tyranny. NATO's ousting of the Taliban in the wake of the 2001 terrorist attacks on the US helped to open new horizons for the country in long-neglected and suppressed areas like social justice, equality for women, education and healthcare. Whatever progress was achieved in those 20 years was dismantled, in fact demolished almost overnight, by the return to power of the Taliban.

David Kilcullen and Greg Mills are two names that will resonate with anyone who has followed the Afghan saga of the past two decades. Both authors are eminently qualified to have produced a narrative of Afghanistan's last days as a free nation and the tragic aftermath of the Taliban seizure of power. Add to this a foreword by Rory Stewart, whose expertise of Afghan history and politics is renowned, and the result is a consummate narrative of all that went wrong in the country.

The scenario for this catastrophic event was set in motion in mid-2021 when the remaining 2,500 NATO troops, who represented Afghanistan's only real safeguard of stability, were removed from the country. As the authors point out: "Signalling an emotional and incomprehensible target date for departure on the twentieth anniversary of 9/11 simply collapsed Afghan government morale, while giving the Taliban no reason to negotiate further."

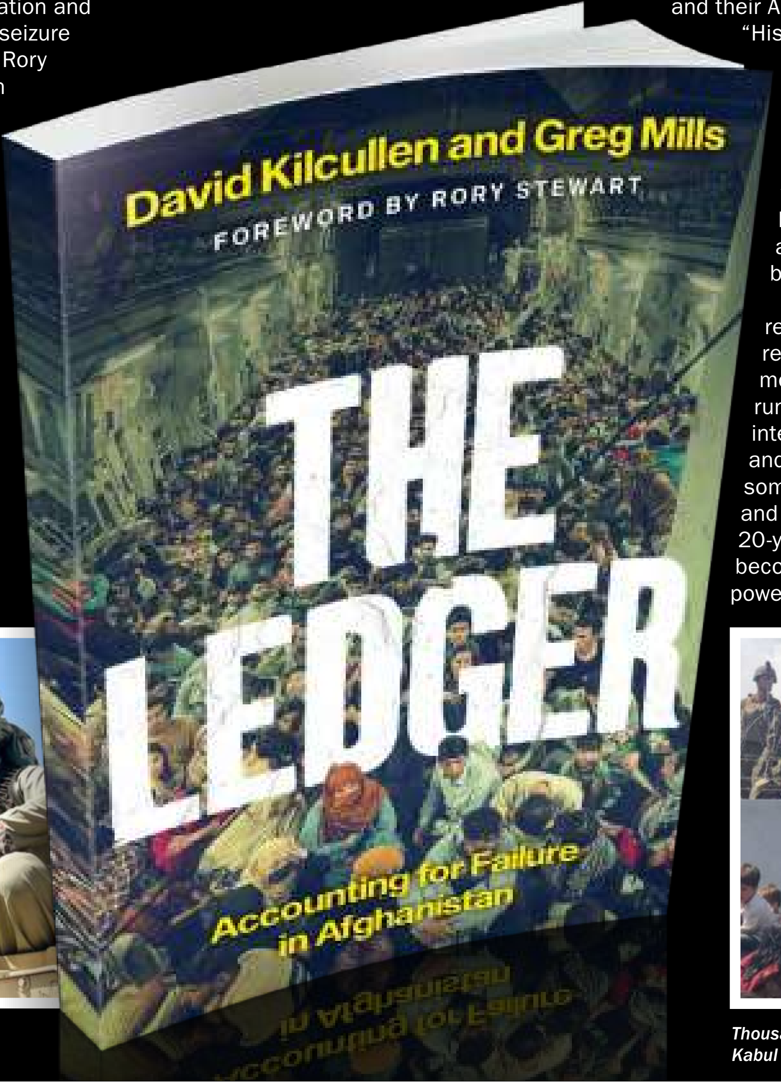
The 'blame game' that erupted in the wake of this hurried and chaotic evacuation – who can forget the scenes of mayhem and ensuing deaths at Kabul airport? – as Kilcullen and Mills highlight, is nothing short of contemptible. Political and military leaders at the highest level have attempted to shift responsibility to the Afghans for everything that went wrong since those fateful days in August.

> **"HISTORY WILL JUDGE US HARSHLY IF WE ALLOW THE HOPE OF A LIBERATED AFGHANISTAN TO EVAPORATE BECAUSE WE FAILED TO STAY THE COURSE"**

The authors list ten factors, from the lack of a single campaign plan and the weakness of multilateralism, to a failure of development assistance and the absence of political leadership, to explain this fiasco of the international mission. Perhaps the most damning of these factors is what the authors cite as the failure of moral character. The reader is reminded of how less than a year after the deployment of US-led forces in Afghanistan, then-Senator Joe Biden asserted that the failure to establish a solid national government could create a safe haven for anti-American terrorists. Biden demanded that the US should spare no effort to oust the Taliban and their Al Qaeda allies. He said: "History will judge us harshly if we allow the hope of a liberated Afghanistan to evaporate because we failed to stay the course." Prophetic words indeed, which will haunt President Biden as the Afghan people are once more suppressed by ruthless despotism.

The persistent question remains one of how to reconcile the politically motivated decision to cut and run with the deaths of 10,000 international troops, contractors and NGO workers, as well as some 200,000 Afghan civilians and military personnel in the 20-year fight to prevent what has become the Taliban's return to power. **JS**

Taliban member photographed near Hamid Karzai International Airport, August, 2021


David Kilcullen and Greg Mills
FOREWORD BY RORY STEWART
THE LEDGER
Accounting for Failure in Afghanistan

Thousands of Afghan civilians flocked to Kabul airport pleading to be evacuated

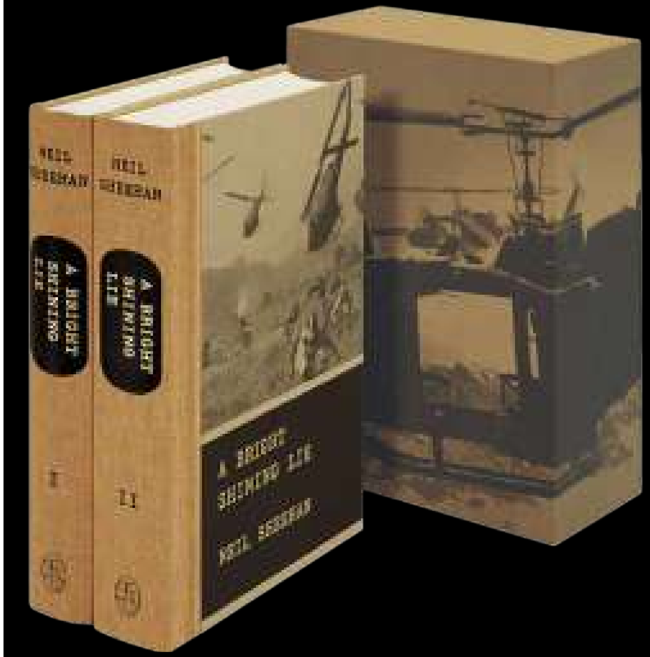
Images © Getty

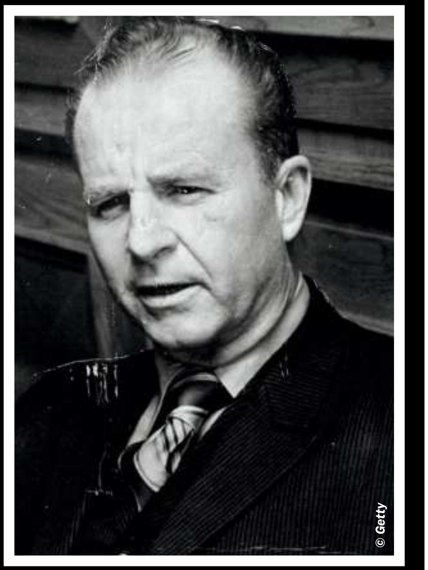
ALL ABOUT HISTORY **RECOMMENDS**

A BRIGHT SHINING LIE

A POWERFUL EXAMINATION OF THE VIETNAM WAR AND ONE OF ITS IMPORTANT CHAMPIONS

Author: Neil Sheehan **Publisher:** The Folio Society **Price:** £125 **Released:** Out now

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John Paul Vann's role in the Vietnam War tells us much about why the conflict ended in US defeat

Neil Sheehan's opus needs little introduction to those with some knowledge of military history writing. Originally published in 1988, *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam* is a Pulitzer Prize-winning examination of America's involvement in the Vietnam War and biography of a key figure of the conflict, John Paul Vann. Sheeham was the journalist who originally published the Pentagon Papers with *The New York Times* in 1971, exposing the depth of involvement of the US government in Vietnam going back to 1945. *A Bright Shining Lie* is one of the most celebrated works about the Vietnam War, and especially about the anger many Americans feel towards how it was led and managed.

Sheehan himself was a relatively young journalist when he arrived in Vietnam to report on the war in 1962, not long after Vann, a US Army lieutenant colonel who advised the South Vietnamese infantry division south of Saigon from March 1962. Vann was a relatively unknown figure to the public, at least when this book was originally published, but a figure very well known to the politicians, military and press connected with the Vietnam war. He had been an important point of contact for the press in those early years, not least because he openly criticised America's approach to the conflict in Vietnam, and especially its relationship with the South Vietnamese, which he saw as corrupt.

But Vann was no anti-war activist working from within. He was a true believer in the Vietnam mission, despite being clear-eyed about its follies and mismanagement. Volume One of this work tells the story of Vann as Sheehan had known him up to his resignation from the Army in July 1963, with the Pentagon seemingly determined to punish him for his willingness to question the manner in which America was waging the war in Vietnam. It recounts those early years and the growing sense of unease, and jumps back and forth between the smaller story of Vann and the wider picture of the war in America and on the ground.

Volume Two begins with a deeper dive into Vann's life story, the man Sheehan came to discover through his research in later years, and then Vann's return to Vietnam as a civilian working for USAID. From here Sheehan tracks the steep decline into chaos and bloodshed, increasingly meaningless and unnecessary, but throughout Vann remains a believer. Sheehan reveals a portrait of a complex man, both revered by those who worked under him and saw him as an honest voice amid a sea of misinformation, but also duplicitous in his own right, hiding his true self from those around him to maintain his credibility. He might generously be described as flawed, much as the Vietnam War might generously be called ill-judged. As Sheehan states, Vann "had exemplified [the war] in his illusions, in his good intentions gone awry, in his pride, in his will to win".

As ever, this Folio edition is beautifully packaged and presented with maps and high-quality photographs, plus a new introduction by award-winning war journalist George Packer, who was suggested to Folio by Sheehan before he passed away in January 2021. **JG**

"AMID THE VILLA'S OPULENCE AND BEAUTIFUL SURROUNDINGS, THE 15 MEN CHILLINGLY DISCUSSED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF 'THE FINAL SOLUTION TO THE JEWISH QUESTION'"

Reinhard Heydrich invited a select group of Nazis to the conference to discuss the murder of Europe's Jews

© Alamy

WANNSEE

A FRESH EXAMINATION OF THE INFAMOUS NAZI CONFERENCE THAT LED TO ONE OF THE WORST CRIMES IN HUMAN HISTORY

Author: **Peter Longerich** **Publisher:** **Oxford University Press** **Price:** **£20** **On sale:** **Out now**

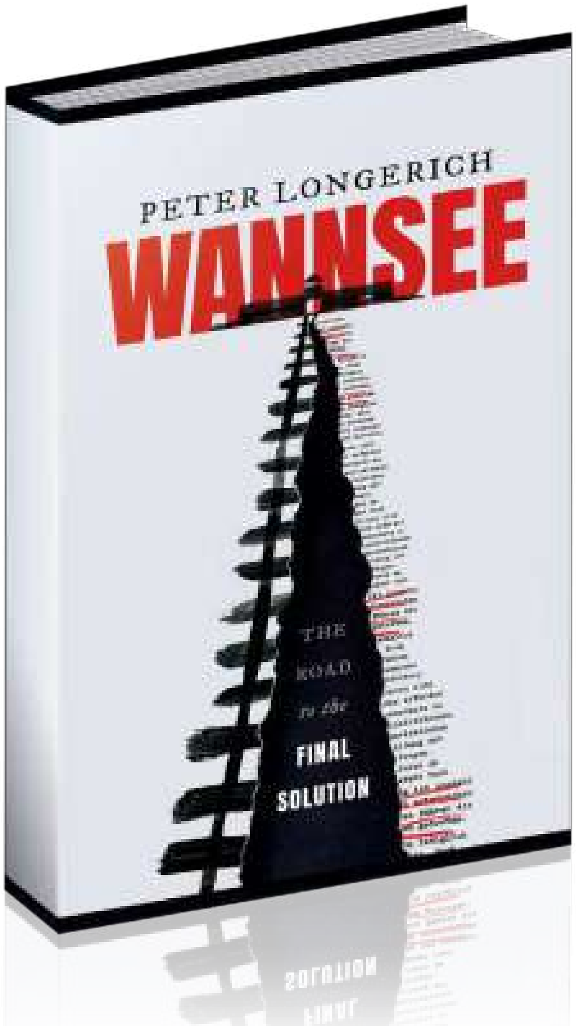
Wannsee is a name that provokes much emotion, and for good reason: on 20 January 1942, 15 senior officials of the Nazi state met at a luxury villa overlooking the Wannsee lake. The villa itself, located in the Steglitz-Zehlendorf borough of Berlin, had only recently been acquired by the Sicherheitsdienst (SD) the previous year for use as a conference centre and guest house. Amid the villa's opulence and beautiful surroundings, the men chillingly discussed the implementation of 'the final solution to the Jewish question' – the destruction of Europe's 11 million Jews.

Invitations to the conference were sent out by Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Reich Security Head Office (RSHA). Of the 15 attendees, ten were university graduates, of which nine were qualified lawyers and eight held doctorates. These educated men conducted the meeting in a business-like manner, and while they often held different views on the details, none raised any objection to the genocide.

Relatively little in the way of documentary evidence relating to the Holocaust survives – the Nazis went to great efforts to cover their tracks. However, of the 30 copies made of the minutes of the Wannsee Conference, one still exists. The document has been heavily studied by historians and a range of differing interpretations has emerged. Peter Longerich has taken a fresh look at these existing views and convincingly argues they are not mutually exclusive. Building on them, he further argues for a more complex explanation and examines just exactly how significant the meeting of 20 January 1942 was in the Nazis' overall decision making. **MS**

© Getty

Millions of innocent people died as a result of decisions made in this mansion overlooking the Wannsee lake



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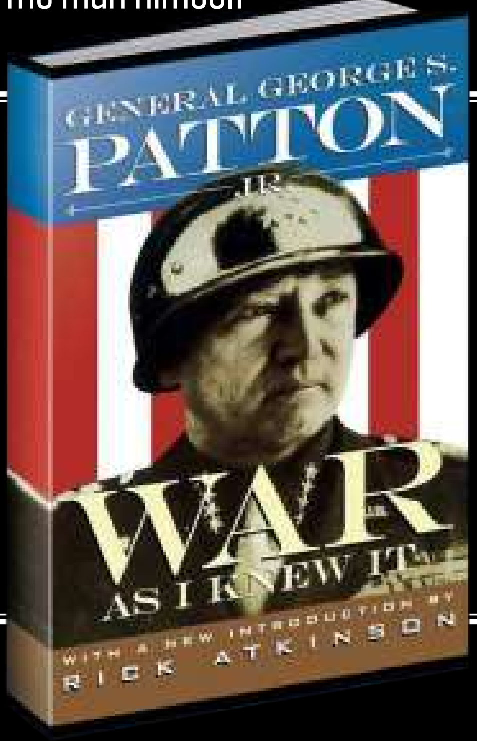
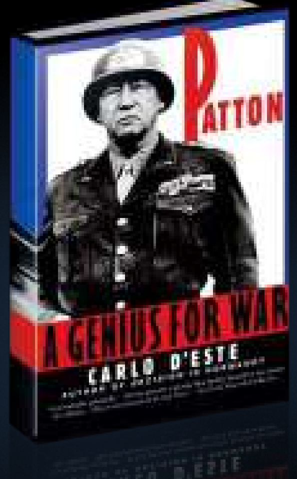
Patton's memoirs expand upon his personal experience of some of the most important battles of the Second World War, as well as his own approach to leadership and tactical philosophy. Published two years after his death, the memoirs also present his side of the often controversial clashes with senior members of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force.

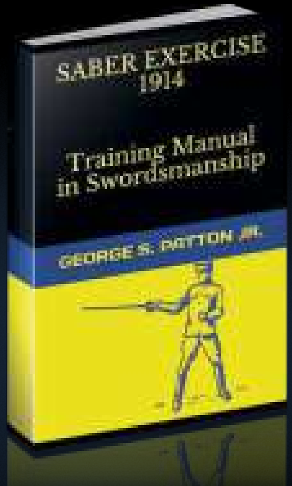

GENERAL GEORGE S.
PATTON
JR.
WAR
AS I KNEW IT
WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION BY
RICK ATKINSON


PATTON
A GENIUS FOR WAR
CARLO D'ESTE

Patton: A Genius for War

Carlo D'Este

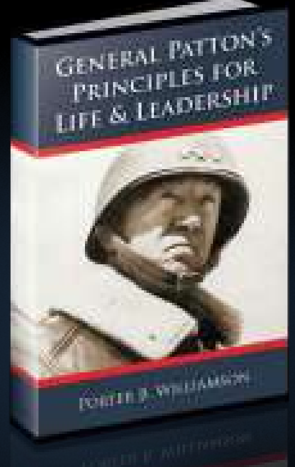
Drawing from letters and diary entries, this biography addresses the legend that emerged around Patton in the decades after his death, not least the 1970 Hollywood film, *Patton*, starring George C Scott. Historian Carlo D'Este digs deeper into the real man that inspired the film, and uncovers a more complex and contradictory character than we are acquainted with on the big screen.


SABER EXERCISE
1914
Training Manual
in Swordsmanship
GEORGE S. PATTON JR.

Saber Exercise 1914

George S Patton

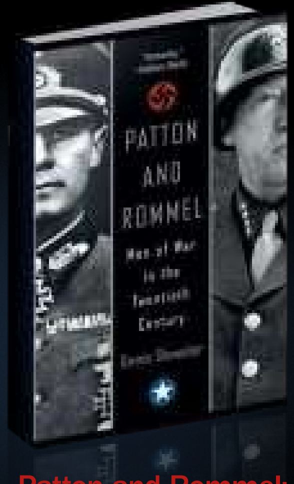
For any budding duellist looking for a few pointers on swordsmanship, this instruction manual was written for the United States War Department by Patton while he was still a young cavalry officer in the US Army. The book includes illustrations from which you can hone your technique, all taken from Patton's experience as a fencer and modern pentathlete in the 1912 Olympics.


GENERAL PATTON'S
PRINCIPLES FOR
LIFE & LEADERSHIP
PORTER B. WILLIAMSON

General Patton's Principles for Life & Leadership

Porter B Williamson

Written by a former soldier who served under Patton as a staff officer at the Desert Training Center in 1942, this book explores Patton's approach to pretty much everything. From views on leadership and health to opinions on courage, tips for decision-making and meditations on living a full life, this is a comprehensive 'how to' do it like Patton.


PATTON
AND
ROMMEL
Men of War
in the
Twentieth
Century
Dennis Showalter

Patton and Rommel: Men of War in the Twentieth Century

Dennis Showalter

Contrasting Patton with what many would describe as his Axis counterpart in more ways than one, Erwin Rommel, esteemed military historian Dennis Showalter examines the record, leadership and legacies of the two men. This parallel biography also explores their pre-WWII careers, their studies of warfare and their unique approach to command.

Images © USMC

Top, left to right: *James Elms Swett earned a Medal of Honor for downing seven Japanese aircraft on a single day on 7 April, 1943. Most of his victories were in 1943, but his last was off Okinawa in 1945*

Harold William Bauer, better known as the 'Coach', was a Medal of Honor recipient widely regarded as the best Marine fighter pilot on Guadalcanal. The only Annapolis graduate among the double-digit aces, he downed 11 enemy aircraft, eight in just two missions

Gregory Boyington was a colourful character who scored his first aerial victories with the Flying Tigers. He became one of the top three Marine aces of all time while leading the storied 'Black Sheep Squadron'

Robert Murray Hanson scored 25 aerial victories over Rabaul in early 1944 and was one of the top-three Marine aces of all time

Joseph Jacob 'Joe' Foss scored 26 aerial victories while flying with VMF-121 in 1942-43. He earned the Medal of Honor and was the first American ace to match the record of 26 aerial victories scored by America's leading World War I ace, Eddie Rickenbacker

AMERICA'S "FEW"

Two years after the Battle of Britain, American airmen faced their own against-the-odds struggle. Here, author and historian Bill Yenne discusses how a handful of US Marine Corps pilot 'aces' achieved a monumental victory over the Japanese in the South Pacific

For the US in the Pacific, the disaster at Pearl Harbor in December 1941 was swiftly followed by some of its darkest days of the war. However, it wasn't supposed to have been that the first line of air defence against the seemingly unstoppable Japanese juggernaut would be a handful of US Marine Corps fighter pilots, trained to support their fellow Marines on the ground.

It wasn't supposed to have been possible that the Japanese would conquer Malaya in six weeks, all of the Philippines outside the Bataan Peninsula in a month and Java – the crown jewel of the Dutch overseas empire – in a week. It wasn't supposed to have been that the Japanese would hand the US Army its biggest rout since 1864, and punish the British in Singapore with what Winston Churchill called the "worst defeat" in British military history.

It wasn't supposed to have been that the only thing stopping the Japanese from isolating Australia from the east was a gaggle of US Marines on the ground holding a small slice of a contested island called Guadalcanal, that nobody had ever heard of. It wasn't supposed to have been, but it was.

Those Marine aviators were few, but for the Allies in the South Pacific in 1942 they were almost all there was. USAAF fighter air power was spread thin worldwide and very thin in the Pacific. US Navy fighters were elsewhere, tied to aircraft carriers in other battles with the Japanese. Meanwhile, Australian and New Zealander air power was fighting the Germans in North Africa.

"THERE WERE MANY DAYS WHEN NO MORE THAN HALF-A-DOZEN PLANES ROSE TO MEET JAPANESE ARMADAS NUMBERING DOZENS OF BOMBERS"

This American 'Few', like the 'Few' of RAF Fighter Command whom Winston Churchill had lionised in 1940, were the last line of air defence against a totalitarian war machine that might well have altered the course of civilisation for generations.

What else did Churchill's 'Few' and the 'Marine Few' have in common? Aside from being outnumbered, it was skill, determination, good training and good aircraft. There was also a good measure of luck.

The Marines were so few that there were many days when no more than half-a-dozen planes rose to meet Japanese armadas numbering dozens of bombers, but eventually the 'Few' would become many. USAAF fighters would begin arriving, the US Navy would send squadrons and so too the New Zealanders. In 1942 and into 1943, what began as a couple of Marine squadrons grew into an ad hoc cluster of units as the other services gradually arrived on Guadalcanal. They called themselves the 'Cactus Air Force' because the Allies had earlier codenamed Guadalcanal 'Cactus'.

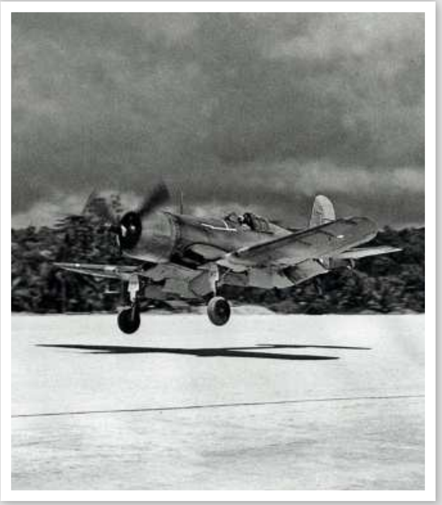
By the end of the war the Marine aces of 1942 would number 122, with 25 becoming the double-digit aces whom I profile in my book *America's Few*. But what was their long-term impact on Marine air power? Once the USAAF and US Navy fighters were present in significant numbers in the Pacific, Marine air power reverted to ground support. However, during the Kamikaze scourge of 1945 over Okinawa, Marines were once again flying interceptor missions.

Among the stories of these aces are those of the three men recognised as the pilots with the highest tally of aerial victories. They are a study in contrasts: Gregory 'Pappy' Boyington and Joseph Jacob Foss were both born in the west of the USA when it was barely out of its 'Wild West' phase, while Robert Murray Hanson was born in India, the son of missionaries.

Each man earned the Medal of Honor. Hanson scored 25 aerial victories, while Foss scored 26 by January 1943, becoming the first American ace of any service to match then exceed the score of Eddie Rickenbacker, America's celebrated 'ace of aces' in WWI.

Boyington's exact total will never be known. On 3 January, 1944, he 'officially' brought his total from 25 to 26 just before being shot down. His total included his claim of six while he had been flying with the American Volunteer Group, the legendary 'Flying Tigers', in China. But AVG records – and Boyington's memoirs – include only two aerial victories. After his release from a POW camp in 1945, he claimed two more for 3 January that were unverified. Therefore Boyington's actual score is between 22 and 28.

A rare colour photo of Corsairs on the flightline at Vella Lavella's Barakoma airfield in 1943



Images © USMC

***Above, left to right:** Gregory 'Pappy' Boyington enjoys a light moment with four of his Black Sheep Squadron aviators beneath swaying palms*

Harold Edward 'Murderous Manny' Segal was a ten-victory 'double ace' when he went back to the States in November 1943, but he decided to return to combat

A Vought F4U-1 Corsair aircraft from Boyington's VMF-214 takes off from a packed-coral runway for a fighter sweep over Rabaul

From my own perspective, I took an interest in Foss and Boyington because of a personal connection to the times and places of their early lives. My mother was born in South Dakota a few years before Foss, and while he was growing up outside Sioux Falls she was growing up a half day's drive away in Highmore. While Boyington was in his teens in St Maries, Idaho, my father was working as a packer for the US Forest Service in the St Joe National Forest. St Maries was the hub of activity for the Forest Service in that part of Idaho. They may well have crossed paths.

Among the lesser-known aces were many who should be more widely recognised. Take Nebraskan Harold William 'Coach' Bauer, the only Annapolis man among the top tier of Marine aces. Also the oldest among them, he graduated from the Naval Academy in 1930 when most of the other top aces were still in elementary or high school. He scored just 11 aerial victories but is remembered by many as the best of the best.

Bauer was a victim of his own extraordinary competence. An exceptional athlete, he was held back as a coach at Annapolis when he might have been off to flight training. When America entered the war he finally got a squadron command, but he was snagged on his way to Guadalcanal in May 1942 by Admiral John 'Slew' McCain, who knew of Bauer's keen organisational skills. McCain kept Bauer at the Allied command centre at Efate in the New Hebrides (codenamed Roses by the Allies) to help put together the logistical infrastructure for Allied air operations in the South Pacific.

In turn, Bauer took to sneaking a ride to Guadalcanal and asking squadron commanders to let him 'freelance' with them. He became an ace in just two such missions, scoring four aerial victories on a single outing on 2 October.

Two weeks later, the Coach finally led his VMF-212 into Guadalcanal. They arrived, nearly out of fuel, as Japanese dive bombers were attacking the destroyer USS McFarland offshore. Seeing that there were no other Allied aircraft in the area, Bauer intervened – alone. With his fuel gauge at empty, he destroyed four of the attackers. His Medal of Honor citation would call it "above and beyond the call of duty" – an understatement.

There is no doubt that Bauer was destined for greatness, but destiny is a tricky rascal. On 14 November, the Coach was flying a mission with Joe Foss and another pilot, chasing Japanese Zeros at near wave-top level. Bauer got one and Foss got one. When Foss went looking for the Coach, he spotted an oil slick on the surface. The Coach was in the water, but unharmed. He waved to Foss and pointed

Images © USMC

Above, left to right: *A later-variant Corsair (note the blown-Plexiglas bubble canopy) belonging to the Black Sheep Squadron touches down on the Marston Matting runway at Torokina Airfield on Bougainville*

Manny Segal of Chicago finished his combat career with a dozen aerial victories

Robert Murray 'Butcher Bob' Hanson scored 20 of his 25 aerial victories in the space of just two weeks in January 1944. He was lost the following month one day short of his 24th birthday

to a small nearby island, apparently indicating that he planned to swim to it.

Foss raced back to Guadalcanal and returned as quick as he could in a seaplane, but the Coach was gone. Over the coming days the Marines landed and searched all the small islands in the area, but the 'best of the best' had vanished without a trace. The mystery was never solved.

Not all the stories of shot down pilots are tragic, however. For instance, there is the tale of a mission on 11 July, 1943, that brought together two double-digit aces from VMF-221 – a wise guy from Chicago known as Harold Edward 'Murderous Manny' Segal and Seattle-born James Elms Swett, who had earned the Medal of Honor for downing seven Japanese aircraft in a single mission three months earlier.

The two airmen were over Kula Gulf off the north tip of New Georgia when Segal reported that he had engine trouble. Swett tried to stay with Segal as they came under attack, but they became separated and were both shot down. Fortunately, they would both survive to tell the tale.

Swett ditched at sea but eventually made it to shore on New Georgia, where he wandered like Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe until he was spotted the next day by two islanders in a dugout canoe who threatened him with axes until he was able to convince them that he was an American. They then took him to the jungle hideout of the well-known coast-watcher Donald Kennedy, a New Zealander who had lived in the Solomon Islands since 1921.

As for Segal, he went into the water off New Georgia, smashing out two teeth in the crash. He was attacked by four Zeros as he drifted in his raft, but they got bored and left him for the sharks. Unable to find his paddles, he was at the mercy of the currents.

Segal spent the afternoon hoping in vain to be seen by passing Allied aircraft, but instead he was discovered by a curious albatross. The huge bird landed nearby and sized up the human and its tiny yellow boat. Finally, he lumbered into the air and landed again on Segal's leg. Apparently unperturbed, it walked down his leg to his foot and seemed otherwise to ignore him.

Carefully, Segal put his other ankle over the bird's feet, trapping it. For about five minutes, the enormous albatross, with a wingspan greater than Segal's height, struggled to get free.

"At first, I was going to let it go," Segal recalled. "But I figured I might not make land and might need [to eat] the bird, so I killed it. While I was choking it, it spit up about three fish into the bottom of the boat, which I also kept."

Apparently, Segal gave no thought to the fate of the Ancient Mariner and his fellow sailors in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's famous poem, upon whom disastrous bad luck descended when the Ancient Mariner killed an albatross.

Segal never got around to eating his bird. Instead, he passed out from exhaustion as rain began to fall. He woke up at dawn and discovered that his raft was growing "pretty soft" as air leaked from it. He was trying to reinflate it by blowing into the valve when he spotted four American destroyers in the distance. They passed him, but suddenly one came about and tossed him a line.

Their 'literary adventures' behind them, both Swett and Segal finished their tours with VMF-221 and returned home, but later volunteered to go back to fly further missions with other squadrons.

Meanwhile, Foss and Boyington became darlings of the media during the war. Foss found fame for matching Rickenbacker to become the highest-scoring Marine, while Boyington commanded VMF-214, the colourful Black Sheep Squadron that the war correspondents loved. In turn, his "tragic loss" at the crescendo of his career and his unexpected "return from the dead" made good copy. Bob Hanson should have and would have enjoyed similar adulation, but he was shot down and disappeared the day before he would have turned 24.

After the war both Foss and Boyington continued to have a high-profile in the media, but for opposite reasons. Boyington was wined and dined as part of a Marine Corps publicity tour, but his alcoholism grew acute. He battled substance abuse, through four marriages, for the rest of his life. In the midst of his struggles Boyington wrote an autobiography, *Baa Baa Black Sheep,* which became a best-seller and led to a television drama series that aired for two seasons, making Boyington a household name once again.

Foss, meanwhile, had a more conventional postwar career. He helped start the South Dakota Air National Guard, was elected governor of South Dakota, hosted an outdoorsman television series and played a role in the creation of the Super Bowl.

On 11 January, 2002, 59 years to the week since he had completed the tour of duty that had earned him the Medal of Honor, the 86-year-old Foss had that very medal, personally awarded to him by President Franklin Roosevelt, in his pocket as he was about to board another aircraft: a jet that would take him east, where he was scheduled to speak to cadets at the US Military Academy at West Point.

As Foss went to board his flight, the metal detector shrieked and he was surrounded by zealous security staff. Only four months had passed since the terrorist attacks of 11 September, 2001, and they were nervously anxious. They searched him vigorously, finding and seizing the offending artefact.

"I wasn't upset for me," Foss said at the time. "I was upset for the Medal of Honor, that they just didn't know what it even was… You're supposed to know what the Medal of Honor is."

Security relented and Foss was allowed to board. He later said that the Medal of Honor "represents all of the guys who lost their lives – the guys who never came back. Everyone who put their lives on the line for their country". Foss, and his fellow Marine aces, were among them.

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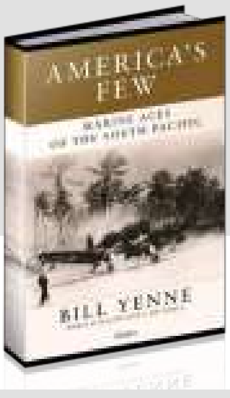

NEXT MONTH

HITLER'S 'TIGER ACE'

HOW MICHAEL WITTMANN BECAME ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL NAZI PANZER COMMANDERS AND HOW THE ALLIES FINALLY DEFEATED HIM

Image: Wiki / PD / Gov

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Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA

Editorial
Editor-in-Chief **Tim Williamson**
timothy.williamson@futurenet.com
Senior Designer **Curtis Fermor-Dunman**
Features Editor **Tom Garner**
Production Editor **Iain Noble**
Senior Art Editor **Duncan Crook**

Contributors
Dr Nyri A Bakkalian, Martyn Conterio, Murray Dahm, Charles Ginger, Jonathan Gordon, Stuart Hadaway, Mike Haskew, James Horton, Mark Simner, Jules Stewart, Bill Yenne

Photography
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Advertising
Media packs are available on request
UK Commercial Director **Clare Dove**
clare.dove@futurenet.com
Senior Advertising Manager **Matthew Johnston**
matthew.johnston@futurenet.com
07801 930735
Account Manager **Garry Brookes**
garry.brookes@futurenet.com
+44 020 3970 4176

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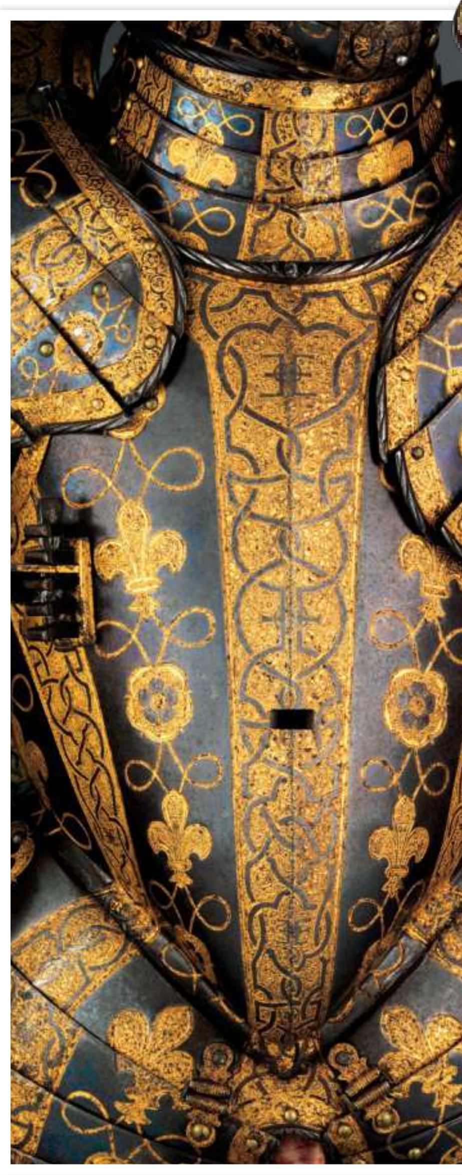
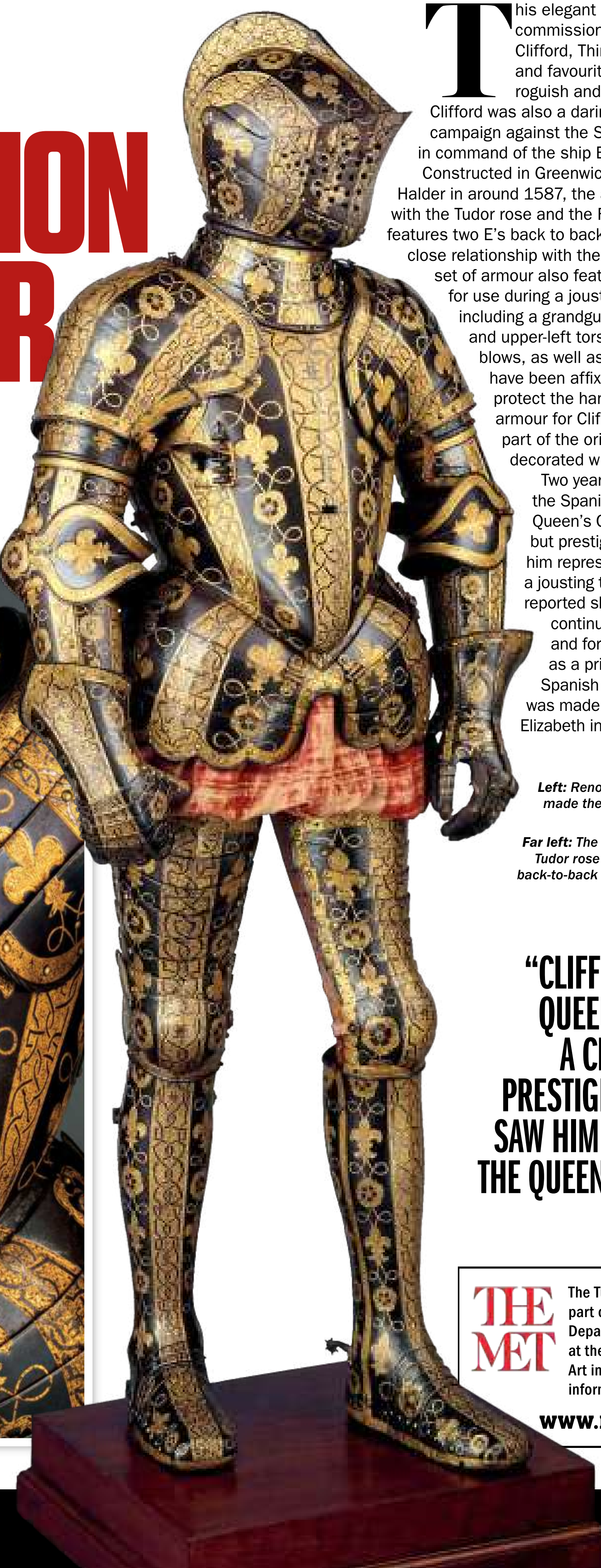
TUDOR CHAMPION ARMOUR

This ornate suit of armour was once owned by Elizabeth I's jousting champion



Images: Metropolitan Museum of Art



This elegant suit of armour was commissioned for Sir George Clifford, Third Earl of Cumberland and favourite to Elizabeth I. A roguish and extravagant courtier, Clifford was also a daring sailor, and during the campaign against the Spanish Armada he was in command of the ship Elizabeth Bonaventure.

Constructed in Greenwich by armourer Jacob Halder in around 1587, the armour is decorated with the Tudor rose and the Fleur de Lis, and also features two E's back to back signifying Clifford's close relationship with the crown. The complete set of armour also features removable pieces for use during a jousting tournament, including a grandguard for the lower face and upper-left torso to deflect lance blows, as well as vamplates that would have been affixed to the lance to protect the hand. Stirrups and even armour for Clifford's mount were also part of the original designs, similarly decorated with the royal symbols.

Two years after the victory over the Spanish, Clifford was made Queen's Champion, a ceremonial but prestigious role that saw him representing the queen in a jousting tournament. Despite his reported skills at jousting, Clifford continued to seek his fame and fortune at sea, operating as a privateer and plundering Spanish vessels and ports. He was made a Knight of the Garter by Elizabeth in 1592 for his service.

***Left:** Renowned armourer Jacob Halder made the elaborate suit for Sir George Clifford in around 1587*

***Far left:** The armour is decorated with the Tudor rose and the Fleur de Lis. The two back-to-back E's symbolise Clifford's close bond with the crown*

> **"CLIFFORD WAS MADE QUEEN'S CHAMPION, A CEREMONIAL BUT PRESTIGIOUS ROLE THAT SAW HIM REPRESENTING THE QUEEN IN A JOUSTING TOURNAMENT"**

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The Tudor Champion armour is part of the collections of the Department of Arms and Armor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. For more information visit:

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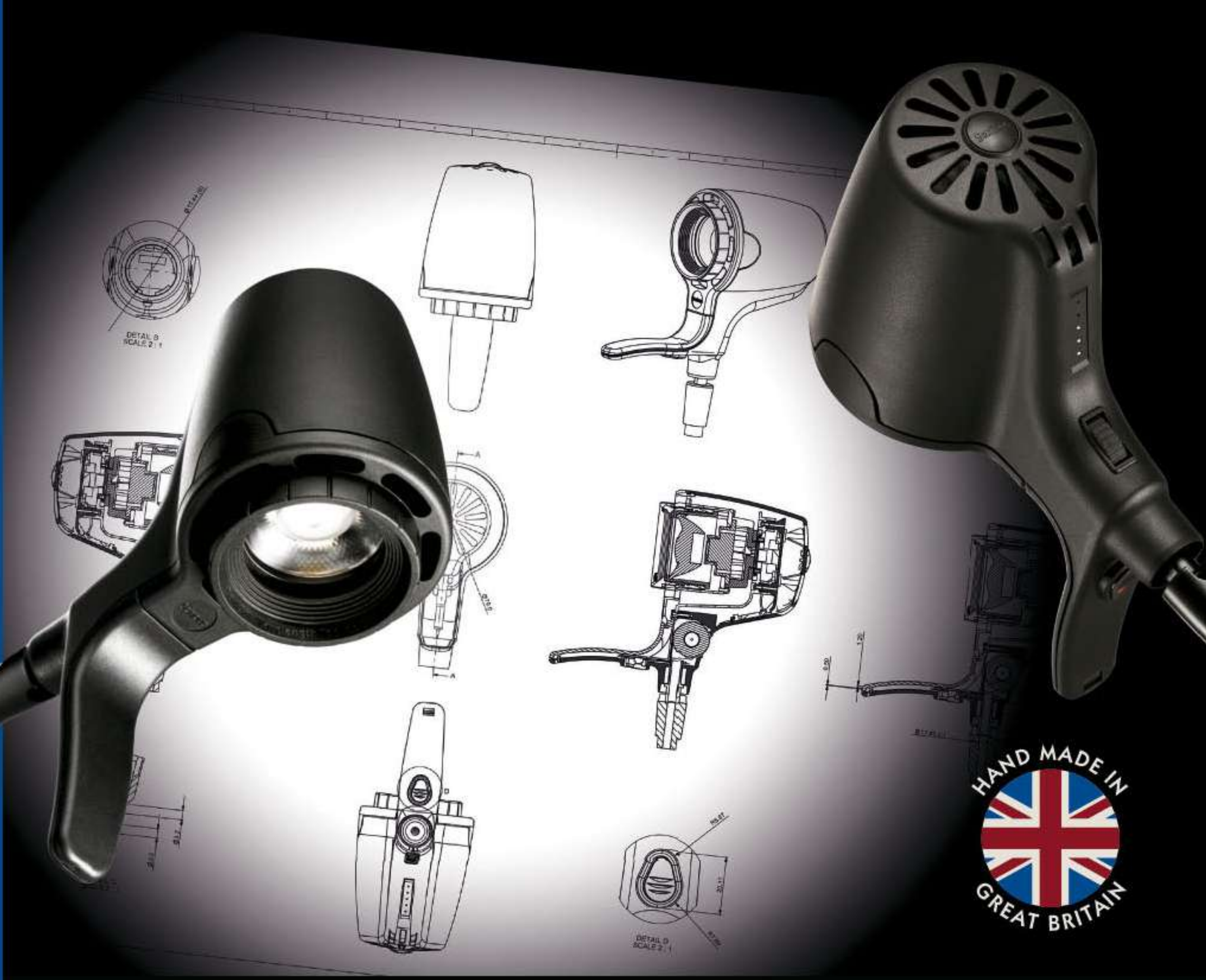

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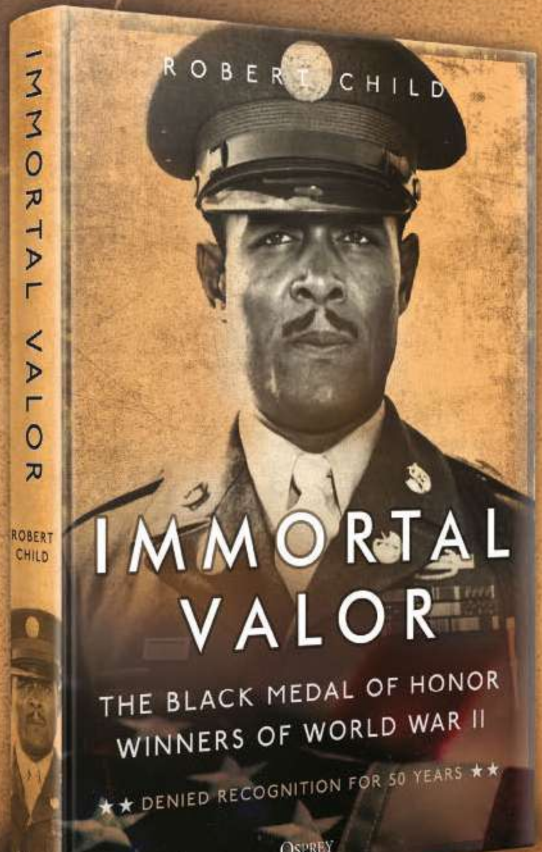

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